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FASHION IN PARIS

1797–1897

Mary Evans.

"One fashion has hardly extinguished another, before it is wiped out by one newer still, which itself gives place to a successor, and that not destined to be the last; so fickle are we!"—LABRUYÈRE.

"Fashion is the Goddess of Appearances."—COLTON.

"An ancient fashion remains a curiosity; a fashion but lately gone by becomes an absurdity; a reigning mode, in which life stirs, strikes us as the very personification of grace."—O. U.

VIGIER'S BATHS

Year V (1797).

FASHION IN PARIS

THE VARIOUS PHASES OF FEMININE TASTE AND ÆSTHETICS FROM 1797 TO 1897 ❧ *By* OCTAVE UZANNE ❧ FROM THE FRENCH BY LADY MARY LOYD ❧ WITH ONE HUNDRED HAND-COLOURED PLATES & TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY TEXT ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRANÇOIS COURBOIN

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN
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INTRODUCTION

THE compilation of a complete bibliography, even the most concise, of the works devoted to the subject of Costume, and to the incessant changes of Fashion at every period, and in every country, in the world, would be a considerable undertaking—a work worthy of such learning as dwelt in the monasteries of the sixteenth century. Such a book would, in an abbreviated form, be a sort of "Dictionary of Origins," useful for the "General History of Mankind."

Its readers would perceive, not without surprise, that the gravest minds, the noblest and least frivolous intellects—often, indeed, the most austere of Churchmen—have found delight in this species of butterfly hunt across time and earthly space, after the vagaries of Fashion.

Nothing, in fact, so conjures up a people or a special period, nothing so closely tallies with their character, and mental and moral state, as the dominant note of their costume, and the vari-coloured splendour of their adornments. The art of dress is governed by certain general laws, which affect the lives, the colour, the harmonious expression of a given whole, increasing or modifying its beauty, to the occasional perversion of our taste, and misguiding of our æsthetic instincts.

Its influence is felt everywhere—in the nation's literature, painting, and statuary, in its ideas, its language, and even its political economy. Science, medical and other, cannot treat questions of dress with indifference, and, as Charles Blanc has remarked, dress and adornment, far from being subjects unworthy of observation, furnish the philosopher with important moral data, and are a very evident clue to the ruling ideas of any special period.

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Further, the incessant mutability of Fashion is a necessity, for this, according to Chamfort, is the most natural toll that can be levied by the industry of the poor man on the vanity of the rich. The whims of Fashion, far from protecting us from her attacks, or weaning us from our devotion, end by haunting us beyond all escape. Her caprices resemble those of the fair sex—the failings which should drive us away are the very charm which draws us back. Men adore Fashion in their youth ; peoples, in their old age, give themselves utterly up to her. Civilised nations are like sensitive women, or, again, like those courtesans whose coquetry increases and becomes more exquisite, as age advances.

" As the intellect broadens, taste grows more perfect," said a certain moralist. Acuteness of perception engenders mutability of feeling, and the excessive delicacy of the æsthetic sense inevitably brings forth a diseased condition of inconstancy, which leads up to the inevitable yoke of Fashion—that Fashion which has never, according to Balzac, been anything more than the general opinion on the subject of dress.

Books on Fashion, then, will be sought and welcomed, to all time and in every sphere, with special favour, because they are both recreative and instructive, and because everybody believes him or herself capable of enjoying, of understanding, and of interpreting them.

They rouse general curiosity. To women they supply the history of their banner, of their guild, of their own versatility. Men, gazing on their pages, seek to call up the memory of dead charms, and their sad thoughts stray to those far distant joys which have faded out for ever. The children open their great wondering eyes on the gay shadows still touched with life's own colours ; and the old return to youth, and feel their dead passions stir again, as they gaze on the sunny mirage of the past, which starts into light under the magic-lantern of these coloured plates.

If we consider France alone—the country which, for so many years, created fashion, and imposed the eternal laws of costume on neighbouring nations—we may fairly say that the art of dress has never been more interesting than since it became democratised, and thus grew general.

The Revolution, which overthrew, with no useful result, so many traditions, and set up humanitarian theories far exceeding in number the really beneficent reforms it conferred on the people—that Revolution which dug so mighty an abyss between two societies, and from which the history of our uncouth modern civilisation takes its

date—the Revolution, when it severed the links of all French tradition, gave birth to a new conception of the æsthetics of dress, of which the fashions of the present century—so extraordinary in their number, so near and yet so far away already—are the logical outcome.

In the beginning, these garments of a newly liberated people left the body free, followed its outlines, and were well-nigh transparent in texture. Their inventors drew their inspiration from nature and the pagan mythology ; they aimed at concealing nothing, and followed the harmonious lines of Grecian beauty ; then, under the Empire, we see them, less frivolous already, growing more Roman, and leaning towards the cramped lines of military uniform. Under the Restoration, the fashions, like the neo-mediæval literature of the time, grew formal, affecting the stiff lines and starched manners of a sham Troubadourism. The year 1830 brought more of the Renaissance, dress was more lissome, more voluptuous ; never were fashions more feminine, more subtle, more original, more exquisitely artistic. Later, exaggeration began, increased, and grew worse and worse, till it reached the monstrous caricature of the crinoline, and the monkey-like trappings of the Second Empire. Later than 1870, we can come to no clear judgment concerning our taste in dress, because a space of more than fifteen years must elapse before any definite opinion can be formed of shapes and colours as a whole. An ancient fashion is always a curiosity. A fashion slightly out of date is an absurdity ; the reigning fashion alone, in which life stirs, commands us by its grace and charm, and stands beyond discussion. These successive fashions, so strange, so curious from many points of view, we have endeavoured to determine in the course of this work, as we marshal them before our readers' gaze, amidst those various surroundings of our beloved Paris, amongst which, in the course of these last hundred years, they have moved and had their being. To save the illustrations from the stamp of commonplaceness, peculiar to the "Fashion Plate," we have desired to make the background of each appropriate, showing forth the architecture against which fashion stood outlined, whether in haunts of elegance, or of mere pleasure. Mons. François Courboin has faithfully carried out this desire, and has reproduced the gallery of retrospective engravings, for which we have appealed to his talent and special knowledge, to our complete satisfaction.

Each of the one hundred coloured illustrations is a faithful witness, a complete representation, of some corner in Paris, vanished now, or utterly changed. Fashion only figures therein as a logical and indis-

pensable accessory, and all the interest is centred in the background of the picture, which reveals one of the most fashionable aspects of our ancient city. The drawings dispersed throughout the text possess all the charm, the spirit, and the delicacy of the old vignettes of the 1840 school, and will certainly delight every amateur, both he whose curiosity is of modern growth, and he whose passion for illustrated books is mingled with certain tender memories of past days. As regards the substance of the book itself—the ten successive chapters on Parisian Fashions—they are, as it were, the artistic expression and synthesis of everything written, in the course of the nineteenth century, on our national *salons*, dress and ideas.

OCTAVE UZANNE.

PARIS: *October* 18, 1897.

A DRIVE IN A WHISKEY

Longchamps, Year V (1797).

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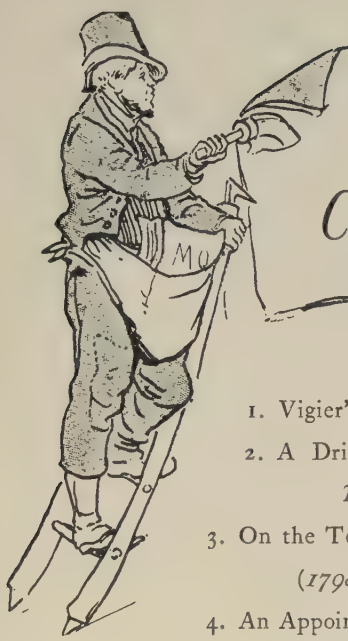

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ERRATA

PLATE 33—*For* "In" *read* "Of"
„ 63—*For* "Indian" *read* "India"
„ 79—*For* "parly" *read* "party"

CHAPTER I

THE CLOSE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

LICENTIOUSNESS OF DRESS AND HABITS UNDER THE DIRECTORY

At the birth of the French Directory, anarchy, utter and complete—an anarchy which brought freedom and consolation in its train—succeeded the sanguinary rule of the "Rasoir National." Everything, even the Empire of the Fair, had been swept away by the Revolution. Clubs and street gatherings had, and inevitably, wiped out every sign of the *salon*, and it was generally recognised that all the wit, the grace, and the refinement of France had disappeared, engulfed in the sanguinary frenzy of the revolutionary populace. The reaction of the Thermidor was to remake and reconstitute all things, to blot out even the hideous memories of the Terror.

It seemed natural, after so prolonged a period of constraint, that pleasure, gaiety, pastimes of every kind, should raise their heads in every quarter. Confusion reigned unchecked. Men lived, so to speak, in a kind of moral interregnum; delighted to forget their sorrows, forget

themselves, intoxicate their senses ; life grew dissolute, virtue facile, and not a thought was given even to the brutality of the means employed. Women, for the most part, awoke to the delightful fact that they had just regained possession of their mightiest weapons. Nothing had so enraged the sex as the absurd attempt made by the Revolution, to introduce the severity or the ferocity of the early Roman laws into our customs. Terrified by this neo-republican austerity, French women strove, by dint of a depravity greater even than that under the monarchy, to oppose this sham Spartan severity ; they set themselves to charm, and their seductive power grew mightier than the most rigid laws, and set at nought all edicts for the regulation of matters of virtue and morality.

The Directory replaced Woman on the mythological throne of love and beauty. She became the wanton sovereign of a panting, fevered, tossing, restless kingdom, a fair-green where appetite and vile passions, petty gains, sordid amours, and every merchandise from which good feeling shrinks, were exposed for sale and barter.

The art of living became the art of pleasing. Courtesy was looked on as a mere prejudice. Young men, addressing ladies, would keep their hats upon their heads. If an old man showed greater civility, the youths made game of the old fellow. No woman thanked a man for picking up her fan. If he bowed to her, she did not return his salutation. She went her way, a joyous healthy creature, ogling the handsome men, laughing in the faces of the ugly. There was no forbidden fruit within this Pagan paradise. The tactics of the game of love went no farther than to arouse desire, and, almost there and then, to gratify it. Each person conjugated the verb *I desire*, *thou desirest*, *we desire*, at their own sweet will, and the impersonal form was never pronounced, so strong was the preference for an immediate use of the imperfect or the past. Divorce was ready to hand, for the freedom of those whom jealousy still tortured. Marriage, according to Cambacérès' terrible definition in the Code, was no longer considered to be anything but the "action of nature," and this civil compact was looked on as purely temporary, any incompatibility of temper sufficing to break the bonds originally knitted for the sake of physical convenience. "The woman of that period," write the Gon-

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ON THE TERRACE OF THE TUILERIES

Year VI (*1798*).

AN APPOINTMENT AT THE CAFÉ DES TUILERIES

Year VI (1798).

court brothers, "passes from one husband to another, seeking her pleasure, unbinding and re-knotting her girdle, moving hither and thither like some charming piece of merchandise—a wife, so long as that does not weary her—a mother, so long as the fact amuses her. . . . Husbands hurry from the arms of one woman to the embraces of another, seeking concubinage in the conjugal state, and the satisfaction of appetite in constant re-marriage. Couples divorce for no reason at all. . . . They marry and divorce, break marriages to marry again, without a touch of retrospective jealousy on the man's part, or modesty on the woman's; and the wedlock of those days would seem modelled on the procedure in a horse-breeding establishment, where divers mates are tried."

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In dancing, especially, the reaction, even on the morrow of the day of deliverance, was sudden, impetuous, tremendous. Scarcely were the scaffolds overthrown, before public balls were opened, in every corner of the capital. The joyous strains of violin and clarionet, of flute and tambourine, summoned the survivors of the Terror to the pleasures of the dance, and they came in their thousands. Dūval, in his "Recollections," gives a full list of these various terpsichorean haunts. First in order comes the splendid garden which had belonged to Farmer-General Boutin, who, with all his colleagues, was executed "for having watered the national tobacco." This its proprietors dubbed with the Italian name of Tivoli. It was the first to open its gates to the public. Another platform was installed in the Jardin Marbœuf, at the end of the Avenue des Champs Elysées. At both these places, gay couples twirled merrily.

Other public balls were opened in swift succession. There was dancing at the Elysée National, once the Elysée Bourbon, where the orchestra was led with extraordinary success by the negro Julien, the Musard of this period. Hither delightful expeditions were made by water. Then there was a ball in the Jardin des Capucines, much frequented by the *modistes* of the Rue St. Honoré and the Rue Neuve-

des-Petits-Champs ; there was Ranelagh, in the Bois de Boulogne, given up, in those days, to errand-boys and counter-skippers ; there was Vauxhall, whither the *grisettes* of the Marais and the Temple crowded, as much attracted by the tricks of the juggler Wals as by the delights of the dance. All these dancing-places were open to the middle classes, on the *quintidi* and the *décadi* (fifth and tenth days). Frascati's and the Pavillon de Hanovre were the meeting-places of the higher classes of society. In the Cité there was a ball *de la Veillée*, at which very singular "Mewing Concerts" were provided. A score of cats were placed, their heads only appearing, on the keys of a harpsichord. Each of these keys had a sharp blade, which pricked a cat's tail, and made it mew, each mew corresponded to a note, and the *ensemble* furnished a complete concert of discords : this entertainment afterwards developed into the celebrated Prado, beloved of the Paris student. On the left bank of the Seine there was the dancing saloon in the Rue Théouville, once the Rue Dauphine ; and opposite the northern doorway of the Church of St. Sulpice, at the entrance to the Rue Servandoni, might be observed a rose-coloured transparency, swinging gracefully and lazily on the breeze, and bearing the words, *Bal des Zéphirs*. This ball, at which the flute-playing (*galoubet*) was a prime attraction, had been opened in the old burying-ground of St. Sulpice. On every side were to be seen the words *Hic requescant*, *beatam spem expectantes*. The gravestones had not been removed, even within the walls of this abode of pleasure, but the youthful dancers recked not whether they disturbed the ashes of the departed, and frolic played its gayest pranks in the abode of death. Another dancing orgie was held in the Rue d'Assas, near the former convent of the Carmes Déchaux, in the very graveyard of the priory. This was opened as the *Bal des Tilleuls*, and hither flocked the devotees of the *danse macabre*.

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Day by day the dancing mania grew stronger. The passing of a decree proposed by Boissy d'Anglas, which restored all the confiscated goods of persons executed during the Revolution, to their heirs, brought joy into the camp of the disinherited, who thus suddenly passed from poverty to affluence. Dazed by their change of fortune, these young people plunged into all the pleasures of their age. They founded an aristocratic ball, for themselves alone, and decided that

nobody should be admitted who could not prove the possession of a father or a mother, a brother or a sister, or, at the very least, an uncle, who had perished on the Place de la Révolution, or at the Barrière du Trône. This was the origin of the celebrated *Bal des Victimes*, in the Hôtel Richelieu, at which quite a special ceremonial was practised, and which brought about real innovations in the whimsicalities of fashion.

Persons arriving at this ball bowed *à la victime*, with a sharp jerk of the head, in imitation of the movement of a condemned person, when the executioner rolls him on to the plank, and pushes his head through the fatal opening. An immense amount of studied grace was thrown into this form of greeting, in which every one did his best to excel. So much elegance did certain young heroes of the ball-room impart to their performance, that the members of the female Areopagus received them with special favour. Each gentleman approached his partner, and left her, with a bow *à la victime*. Further, certain superlatively elegant cavaliers hit upon the device of cropping their hair close at the back of the neck, after the fashion set by Samson for the toilette of the condemned victims of the Revolutionary Tribunal. This ingenious innovation elicited transports of admiration amongst these extravagant young folk. The ladies followed the fashion, and boldly clipped their hair to the roots. The *coiffure à la victime*, thus brought into being, was to spread all over France, and eventually to be called the *coiffure à la Titus*, or *à la Caracalla*. As a finishing-touch to this grisly piece of buffoonery, the daughters of persons who had perished by the guillotine adopted a red shawl, in memory of that cast by the executioner over the shoulders of Charlotte Corday, and Mesdames de St. Amarante, before they mounted the scaffold.

1797

In consequence of the rank and extravagant behaviour of its frequenters, the *Bal des Victimes* soon became the central point in the gaiety of Paris. Thither did every one betake himself, to see the fashions of the day, and the young girls, who whirled in the mazes of the recently imported waltz, vied with one another in dress, and beauty. . . . By degrees they put off their mourning garb, and ruffled it fearlessly in satins, velvets, and bright cashmeres. At these

bold-faced gatherings appeared the first Laconian tunics, and chlamys, with their waving lines of colour, chemises of the finest cambric, gowns of gauze and lawn, and the alluring buskin, with its dainty ribbons crossed over the instep. These Greek and Roman freaks of fashion were, for the most part, brought in by the fair descendants of the victims of the guillotine. Some charming creatures, the most close-cropped of all, carried their love of realism and ghastliness so far as to fasten a narrow red band about their necks, in most satisfactory imitation of the fatal knife-mark. This, the Incroyables vowed by their "*petite pa'ole d'honneu panachée*," was "*divin, admi'able, 'uisselant d'inouïsme !*"

1797

Between the country dances, ices, punch, and sherbet were consumed; gentlemen clasped their partners' hands and received their declarations of affection; and, if ocular testimony is to be received, "people ended by agreeing that, after all, the worthy Robespierre was not so black as he was painted, and that *the Revolution had its advantages !*" *

Nothing was left for these lunatics, except to sing, like the fair Cabarrus, the verses of a satirical song which had a considerable vogue during the Directory:

"Quand Robespierre reviendra,
Tous les jours deviendront des fêtes.
La Terreur alors renaîtra
Et nous verrons tomber des têtes.
Mais je regarde . . . hélas ! hélas !
Robespierre ne revient pas !"

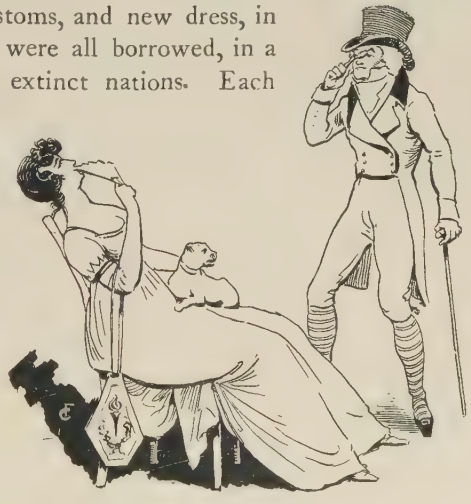
Round about the *Bal des Victimes*, all Paris was scraping violins; it was a universal skipping. There were subscription dances at the *Bal*

* In Ripault's "Une Journée de Paris" (year V) we have yet other ocular testimony, borne by Polichinelle, who has strayed into the *Bal des Victimes:* "I saw a handsome youth, and this handsome fellow said to me: 'Ah, Polichinelle ! they have killed my father ! . . . Have they killed yours ?' . . . And I pulled out my handkerchief—and he began to dance:

Zigue, zague don don,
Un pas de rigaudon."

de Calypso in the Faubourg Montmartre, at the Hôtel d'Aligre and the Hôtel Biron; at the Lycée des Bibliophiles et des Nouvellistes, in the Rue de Verneuil; at Wenzell, the florist's, in the Rue de l'Echiquier; in every street in the Cité. Good society went by preference to the Hôtel Longueville, where the lovely and voluptuous Madame Hamelin did not scorn to exhibit her indolent charms, and show off her never-to-be-forgotten *un*dress. All classes of society were galvanised into this Saltomania. The rigadoon reigned even in the miserable attics of the outlying faubourgs, and several so-called *bals champêtres* were opened in restaurant cellars, and even in the basement floors of shops!

Never did the French nation offer its observers a stranger, more incoherent, various, and extraordinary sight than in the early period of the Directory. Everything—habits, traditions, language, throne, altar, manners and customs—had been swallowed up in the Revolution. But the light-heartedness peculiar to the nation floated above all this ruin. The careless, boastful, ready wit, that undying spirit of raillery and mirth, the invaluable basis of the national character, reappeared on the very morrow of the tempest, more keen, more lively, more indomitable, even, than in the past. As no tradition of that past remained, nor any possibility of extemporising a whole society, with new rules, new customs, and new dress, in the space of a single day, these were all borrowed, in a lump, from ancient history and extinct nations. Each individual was bedizened and made up according to his or her own sweet will, each talked his or her chosen jargon. It was a universal travesty, an unlimited carnival, a never-ending senseless orgie. Nobody can look back, from these latter days, on the general character and petty details of the libertinage of those, without being tempted to believe the whole thing a colossal joke, a tremendous caricature, invented by some humorist of the school of Rowlandson or Hogarth. Yet, in spite of the reign of folly in Paris, the armies of the Sambre-et-Meuse,



1798

of the Rhine, of the Moselle, and the splendid battalions of the Army of Italy were carrying the fame of our arms, and scattering the seeds of liberty, far and wide. The whole world rang with our victories; the feats of Bonaparte had startled the old continent of Europe. Surely such glory as this might for once have instilled pride and wisdom into the horde of Jumping Jacks who were turning Paris into a deafening and utterly indescribable puppet-show!

1798

My readers will find it hard to conceive that the victories of Ney, of Championnet, and of General Bonaparte elicited no special symptoms of joy or of enthusiasm, on the boulevards and in the public squares of the French capital. If contemporary journalism is to be believed, the public treated the newspaper hawkers, who shouted the great victories won by French generals, with coldness and indifference. What men longed for was peace, quiet, plenty. The love of petty gain had infected every class, the wild intoxication of the masquerade had annihilated every noble impulse. The *Ecrouelleux*, the *Inconcevables*, the *Merveilleux*, with their chins sunk in their huge cravats, cursed the leaders of the Directory, spoke slightingly of our soldiers' conduct, and vowed, with vapid air, that "*Pa'ole victimée, cela ne peut pas du'er.*" Even the fêtes held by the Directory in honour of our valiant soldiers lacked dignity and real grandeur. They were marked by instances of flagrant bad taste, and the theatrical ceremonial indulged in did not save them from ridicule. When Junot delivered the standards, taken at the battle of the Favorita, to the Government, he, like Murat, was received with great pomp, but a letter from Lavalette, the aide-de-camp, to an intimate friend, describes the ceremony which generally attended less important and less public receptions. "I have seen," so he writes, "in the apartments of the little Luxembourg Palace, our five kings, robed in the mantle of Francis I., bedizened with

1798

THE FOUNTAIN IN THE RUE DU REGARD

Year VII (1799).

THE THÉATRE DES VARIÉTÉS.
Year VII (1799).

lace, and crowned with Henry IV. hats. La Revellière-Lépeaux's face looked like a cork stuck between two pins. Mons. de Talleyrand, in wine-coloured silk pantaloons, sitting on a folding-stool at Barras' feet, solemnly introduced the Grand Duke of Tuscany's Ambassador to the sovereigns, while General Bonaparte ate up his master's dinner. On a raised platform to the right, fifty singers and musicians from the Opera, Lainé, Lays, and the actresses, screamed a patriotic cantata set to Méhul's music; on another, to the left, a couple of hundred ladies, in all the glory of their youth and freshness, and nakedness, fell into raptures over the good fortune and the majesty of the Republic. All of these ladies were habited in white muslin tunics over tight-fitting silk nether garments, such as are worn by opera-dancers.

1798

Most of them sported rings on their toes. The morrow of this splendid entertainment saw the heads of several thousand families proscribed, forty-eight departments shorn of their representatives, and thirty journalists sent away to die at Sinnanary, or on the banks of the Ohio."

In addition to these *fêtes* in honour of Victory, the Directors, following the classic fashion, had instituted certain public festivals, to be held on fixed dates, in honour of the Republic and the foundation thereof. Other days were sacred to the Fatherland, to Virtue, or to Youth. There was even a Festival of Marriage, strangely inappropriate at a moment when divorce was the rage, and when no one would have dreamt of raising the sorriest monument to Fidelity, and least of all to Constancy. The Luxembourg, of which palace the five Directors had taken possession, had, as a contemporary poet remarks, become a regular court, and the said court being, thanks to Barras the voluptuary, especially accessible to the fair sex, the easiest manners were soon imported into it. Republican austerity melted away under the influence of love-making and gallantry, and women swiftly regained,

and to the full, the power from which they had been ousted during the long reign of the Convention. The Citoyennes de Staël, Hamelin, de Château-Regnault, Bonaparte, and Tallien queened it in Paris, and no merrymaking was complete without them. The fair Madame Tallien especially, daughter of the Comte de Cabarrus, ex-wife of Mons. de Fontenay, future spouse of the Comte de Caraman-Chimay, seems to have been the unquestioned sovereign of the Directory. The satirical sentence, "Respect the national property!" had been attached to the hem of her Roman garment!

1798

A witty reply, long current in that frivolous society, was freely circulated at this period. A fop had set himself to dog the famous lady's steps, and she, grown weary and impatient, turned upon him: "Why, sir, do you stare at me?" "I do not stare at you, madam," replied the wag, "I stare at the Crown Jewels!"

It is fair to say that the former Madame de Fontenay treated those who had lost their all with the most untiring and never-failing charity, a fact which gave rise to the remark that if the Citoyenne Bonaparte had won the title of "Notre Dame des Victoires," the beautiful Madame Tallien had richly earned that of "Notre Dame de Bon Secours."

The most brilliant gathering in the Luxembourg, that which all the best company loved to frequent, was certainly held in Barras' rooms. Simplicity and good nature reigned; the conversation lacked, as a rule, the wit of former days, but there were laughter in plenty, merry games, and unceremonious joking. Mons. de Talleyrand might be seen sitting down cheerfully to a hand at *bouillotte*, while Madame de Staël talked in eager whispers with Marie Joseph Chénier or François de Neufchâteau. The other Directors each entertained on some one day in the *décadi*, but their receptions lacked brilliancy. In the rooms of La Revellière-Lépeaux—*Laide peau* (ugly skin), as people called him—the popular apostle of *theo-philanthropy*, the guests talked of nothing but the new religion, and "put their vices to the question." It was duller still at the entertainments given by Letourneur and Rewbell. There folk yawned, and never talked at all. But France, as a whole, was not in Paris. The country was chiefly represented at the Serbelloni Palace at Milan, and at the Castle of Montebello, where a brilliant court crowded

IN THE GARDENS OF THE TUILERIES

Year VII (1799).

STOCK-JOBBING IN THE PALAIS-ROYAL

Year VII (1799).

to pay its homage to the fascinating Joséphine, whose charms made as many conquests as did the genius of her illustrious lord.

The real meeting-place, under the Directory, was the street; Le Petit Coblentz, and Tivoli, with its forty acres of verdure, Monceau, and Idalie; the Hôtel Biron, and the Elysée, and even the Butte Montmartre, whence, every evening, a dozen displays of fireworks rose on the darkness, and scattered their jewelled sheaves over Paris, in showers of diamond and emerald sparks. The street rang with perpetual merrymaking; night after night the noisy bands of smart stockjobbers and contractors, with their mistresses, wended their way to the Théâtre Feydeau, and to others. In summer time the gay world took its pleasure under the greenwood-tree, at Bagatelle, or at the *Jardin de Virginie* in the Faubourg du Roule—on the site of the former Hôtel Beaujon. The Aimables and the Merveilleux fell into ecstasies over these turfy spots, with their streams and waterfalls, their grottos and their turrets, lighted up with red lamps, ringing with military music, and full of half-nude nymphs, who never dreamt of hiding themselves among the willows. The chief temple of pleasure, and the most attractive, was Tivoli. Here were green slopes, and tiny cascades, and winding walks, lined with rows of pretty women; and every pastime known to the Cytherean goddess lay ready to your hand.

1798

In this Kingdom of Astrea did society under the Directory take its pleasure,—a wild and careless carnival, illumined by the pyrotechnic fancies of the brothers Ruggieri, entertained by mountebanks' capers, coarse songs, and fair-day performances, and delighted by acrobatic feats of every kind.

"Oh, loud-voiced pleasure!" cries Mercier, "your tumult is woman's true element! In spite of her wild invectives against the present state of things, her looks betray her satisfaction. Never, in any other country, has she been allowed such perfect licence.

"They have danced, and eaten, and drunk; they have each played three or four lovers, of different sections, false, and all this with a frankness and an ease which would make us believe this century of ours can dispense with the slightest shadow of hypocrisy or dissimulation, and that to palliate any one of our tastes and habits, would be an unworthy act.

"What noise is that? Who is this woman who advances heralded by plaudits? Let us draw near, let us consider the crowd that surges round her.

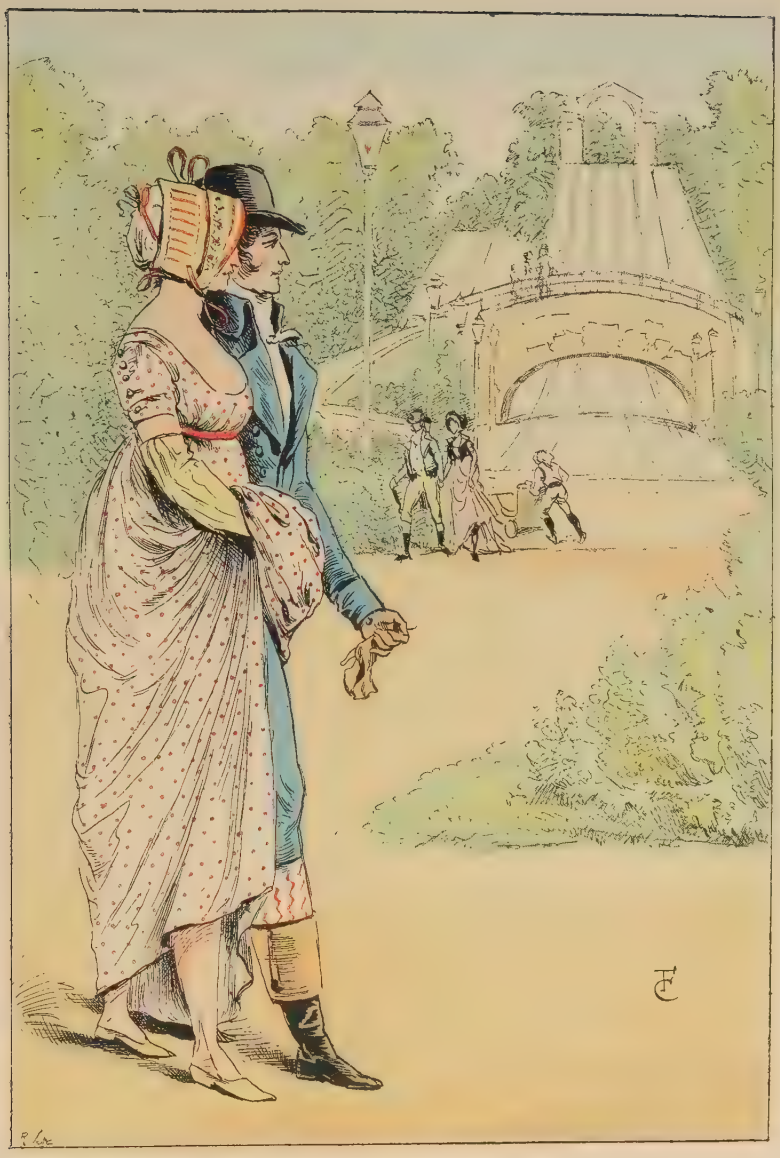
"Is she naked? I hardly know. Come nearer yet—here is a subject worthy of my pencil. Behold her thin pantaloons, like Monseigneur the Comte d'Artois' famous skin breeches! This lady's nether garment, excessively tight, though silken in texture, is adorned with a kind of bracelet. The upper dress is skilfully cut open, and the full bosom is displayed, heaving under an exquisitely painted gauze. A transparent cambric chemise reveals the legs and thighs, clasped by golden circlets set with diamonds. A number of young men, pouring forth gay and dissolute talk, surround this fresh specimen of a bare-faced Merveilleuse. The antique dances of the daughters of Laconia might easily be seen amongst us now. So slight a veil remains, that I hardly know whether the removal of its transparent folds would not be a gain to modesty. Those skin-tight flesh-coloured garments heat the imagination, and heighten the beauty of the most secret forms and charms. . . . Glorious, truly, are the days which have followed on the reign of Robespierre!"

1798

In the autumn, the same crowds of diaphanous robes and muffled-up chins were to be seen at tea-parties, concerts, and theatres. Some danced, some eat ices at Garchy's or Velloni's. The Pavillon de Hanovre was in high fashion. In those rooms in the Hôtel Richelieu, rose-crowned goddesses, breathing perfume, floated hither and thither in their transparent classic robes, ogling the Incroyables, waving their fans, coming, going, whirling about, laughing, tempting, dainty to look on, loud-voiced, bold-faced, seeking their masculine prey.

And amongst the men, tongues wagged cruelly, with a merciless delight in exposing the vices of the voluptuaries in high places.

"Look at all those women," hissed some young Spartan to his neigh-



THE FIRST SWITCHBACK

Year VII (1799).

AN OPÉRA BALL

Year VIII (1800).

bour. "Well?" "Well! every one is under the protection of some deputy!" "Do you believe it!" "Believe it, indeed! . . . . See that one with the bright eyes and slight figure. She is Raffron's mistress; Raffron, who loudly proclaims the cockade to be the citizen's fairest ornament. That young lady over there, with neck uncovered and blazing with diamonds, is Guyomard's sister—his last motion in the Chamber earned him the Crown Jewels. That tall fair girl yonder is the second daughter of Esnard, who has put aside a hundred thousand crowns for her dowry. She is to be married to-morrow. There is not a member of the legislative body but has two or three women of his family here to-night, and every lady's gown has cost the Republic part of its property."

1799

Thus the ball of conversation tossed to and fro, touching now on a love affair, now on some bargain, now on politics, and now on stockjobbing—here a joke, and there a pun. Every shade of opinion, every caste in society, was to be found at these subscription gatherings, where all the world met to applaud that Vestris of the drawing-room, Monsieur de Trénis. Women of the best classes, who did not dare to attract attention, and betray luxurious habits, by entertaining regularly in their own houses, had no hesitation in mingling with the fair and frail frequenters of such places, even, as Thélusson's, Frascati's, and the Hôtel de Richelieu. Full dress was the general rule. But there was an instinctive preference for a more *négligé* style of attire. At Thélusson's, at Frascati's, at the Pavillon de Hanovre, the company, so Madame d'Abrantès tells us, was *pretty nearly* composed of the best society in Paris. Thither folks crowded after the opera, or the play, sometimes in parties of some five and twenty persons. Old acquaintances would meet and talk, and take "a cup of tea"—of the most various description—for the fare provided included everything, from the homely stew to green peas and champagne.

But it is fair to confess that the ladies of the Directory period possessed none of the delicacy and languid grace with which our fancy has endowed them, nor any of those ultra-polished and die-away charms which, in later times, were held to constitute refinement. Without exception, almost, they were buxom, healthy, loud-voiced beings,

masculine in their ways, broad in their talk, opulent of charm, with the appetites of nursing mothers, greedy and dainty too, ruled solely by their senses, in spite of their sudden simulated fainting fits and sham headaches. It was a sight to behold them, when the concert was over, falling on the supper, demolishing turkey and cold partridge, truffles and anchovy *pâtés*, in mighty mouthfuls, pouring down wine and liqueurs ; eating, in fact, as one pamphleteer put it, "for every fundholder, and soldier, and clerk and employé in the Republic." And, indeed, these half-naked nymphs were bound to provide themselves a solid framework, to resist the chest attacks that lay in wait for them at every door. The winter draughts would soon have triumphed over those cambric gowns and tunics *à l'aurore*, if a course of high feeding had not preserved their wearers.

1799

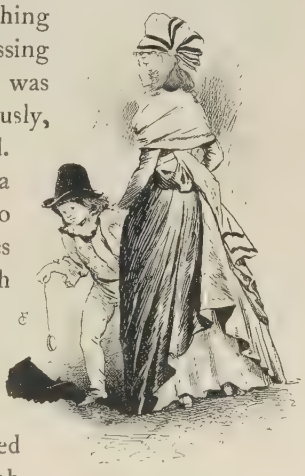
The Nymph and the Merveilleuse—those types of a period of deep corruption and open libertinage, when early youth claimed all the freedom of maturer years, and the *sacrement de l'adultère* was universally proclaimed—the Nymph and the Merveilleuse, I say, were the accepted deities, worshipped on every *décadi*, and at every Pagan festival of the Republic. Mere plastic beauty theirs, these priestesses of nudity and of the God of Pleasure, so in love with their own bodies that their souls had forsaken them, their wits all gone astray in the wilds of a sham mythology, aping Greece for the sake of its antique beauty, so as to liken themselves to the sculptor's Venus, or the fabled heroines of ancient history !

The young men of the period were their worthy partners. Listen to this short sketch from the pen of one of their female contemporaries : "More presumptuous, even, than youth generally is ; ignorant, because for the last six or seven years education has ceased, and licence and debauchery have taken the place of gallantry. More quarrelsome than soldiers who have never known any life but that of camps, talking a

jargon of their own invention, almost as absurd as their huge cravats—dozens of yards of muslin rolled about their necks ; and to crown everything, both insolent and foppish. Out of opposition to the Royalists of the Clichy Club, they have adopted a style of dress intended to differ in every detail from that worn by the youthful aristocracy—a very short waistcoat, a coat with broad swallowtails, trousers that would make me a gown, short Russian boots, and a neckcloth in which they are fairly buried. Add to this costume a walking-cane like a tiny club, half the length of your arm, an eyeglass the size of a saucer, hair curled into ringlets, falling over the eyes and hiding half the face, and you will have some conception of the Incroyable of the present day."

Let us glance at these Goddesses of the Directory period, early in the year V, as they set forth on that "Promenade de Longchamp," then lately established—a scene in which each performer vied with the other in elegance and beauty, and where an incredible display of dress was made. Let us follow the fair wearers through all the ephemeral changes of the fashion, down to the later years of the century.

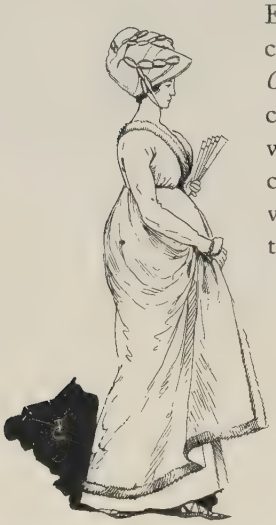
Nothing could have been less French than the garb affected by fashionable ladies early in the year V. Their tunics were Greek, and so were their buskins ; their pelisses were Turkish, their caps were Swiss : everything marked them travellers, prone to wander over the face of the earth. A most astonishing phase, which followed on the styles of hairdressing known as the *Titus*, *à la victime*, or *à l'hérissé*, was the blind partiality to wigs. A short time previously, any fair lady would have shivered at the very word. But, at this Republican epoch, the sacrifice of a woman's hair became her glory . . . added to which, she carried her gown lifted up to the calves of her legs. This free and easy air, together with her flat shoes, imported something determined and manly, and anything but appropriate to her sex, into her gait.



A Game of Emigrette.

On the hair was worn a dainty cap, rather like an infant's first close hood, or else a high fluted crowned bonnet known as a *chapeau Spencer*, with an eagle's feather. This same year saw caps gathered on running strings, some like infants' caps, trimmed with lace and made of lawn, and of black, or cherry-coloured, or violet, or deep green velvet, with a flat gimp laid over the seams,

and lace gathered round the edges. A flat-crowned turban, adorned with pearls and an aigrette, and brought into fashion by the advent of a Turkish Ambassador to Paris, was also worn. Then there were English drawn bonnets trimmed with crape, there was a cap called the *Jardinière*, another bonnet called the *Casque-ballon*, another, *à la folle*, trimmed with a multi-coloured scarf, and blonde, and lace, which half hid the wearer's face. There was the morning cap of gauze-covered lawn, there was a white bonnet *à la Lisbeth*, worn over a cherry-coloured cap, brought into vogue by the actress St. Aubin, in the opera of *Lisbeth*, at the Théâtre-Italien ; there was a bonnet *à la Primerose*, also borrowed from a play of that name. There was a helmet-bonnet, *à la Minerve*, a twisted turban, and a score of other head coverings, one more charming and more graceful than the other, and all of which, whimsical though they were, set off the attractive and passionately eager faces of their wearers to perfection.



1799

Scarves, too, were worn, thrown carelessly, draped, gathered, as fancy dictated. There was no rule as to their shape, each lady's taste decided her own style, and this headdress was perhaps the most charming, the most roguish of them all. No chignon was worn beneath it ; a few curls strayed over the forehead, and an ample drapery disposed above them, a black fillet, and carefulness in making the most of the three corners of the headdress, were the only points on which fashion insisted. A Parisian *grisette* in her morning garb was a sight worth seeing. A contemporary engraving shows us one, in the dress she affected at these early hours. She has covered her head with the first scarf she could lay her hand on ; her hair strays loosely under it, the knot behind concealed by its folds. Her white jacket fits closely to her waist, her petticoat is striped, her stockings clocked, her slippers are of green morocco. Thus attired, she sallies forth to do her marketing, no basket on her arm, nothing but a white handkerchief, in which to carry home her eggs and fruit and flowers. Merrily she will retrace her steps, bearing her heavy purchases, one hand clasping her little bundle, the other holding her petticoat high up to her knee, so as to display her white chemise, and her well-turned calf, imprisoned in its immaculately white knitted stocking.

During their morning walk, the Parisian ladies cast off all super-

fluous adornments, so as to lose nothing of the breeze's soft caress. A thin dress revealed every outline, a shawl of lawn, lemon-coloured, or pale pink, replaced the scarf; a plain cap, the lace trimming falling beneath a wisp of spangled gauze, and little red buskins, with ribbons of the same colour, laced round the legs. Such was the costume in which these Graces betook themselves, somewhat late in the day, to admire the sunrise.

In the daytime, nothing was to be seen but chemises *à la prêtresse*, lawn gowns cut on antique patterns, *à la Diane*, *à la Minerve*, *à la Galatée*, *à la Vestale*, *à l'Omphale*, close moulded to the body, leaving the arms bare, and, loose though they were, marking the outlines as clearly as damp drapery could have done it.

The ladies insisted that their dresses should show every contour, and be of transparent fabrics. In vain the doctors spent their breath in assertions that the French climate, temperate as it was, did not admit of clothing as light as that of ancient Greece. The counsels of the disciples of Hippocrates fell on deaf ears, and, at the close of the year VI, Delessart found himself in a position to assert that he had seen more young girls die during the reign of nakedness veiled in gauze, than during the forty years preceding it.

A few daring women—among them the fair Mme. Hamelin—ventured to show themselves without any covering save a straight garment of gauze. Others displayed their naked bosoms. But these indecencies were not repeated. The good sense of the populace, and its rough jests, nipped them in the bud, and, when the yells and insults of the passers-by drove them back to their own homes, the profligate women who were dead to any sentiment of shame, realised, at least, the danger of their own impudence.

1799

By degrees, however, this transparent fashion in dress was altered. In Woman's empire every change is swift. Towards the month Brumaire, in the year VII, dresses *à l'Egyptienne*, turbans *à l'Algérienne*, scarves *au Nil*, and caps *en Crocodile*, held the fancy of our frivolous fair ones. The Egyptian campaign brought huge vari-coloured ribbed turbans, adorned with curved feathers, into fashion, the centre cap of a different colour from the folds that entwined it. The reticule returned to favour

in a military form, repeated with endless variations, and successively adorned with emblems, riddles, arabesques, cameos and cyphers.

The hair was ruffled up by hand, *à la Titus* or *à la Caracalla*, jockey caps were worn, and post-boys' caps, and hunting-caps trimmed with poppy red velvet. The *chapeau ballon*, and the helmet shape, won great popularity. The very managers of the regular fashion journals were puzzled and startled, at last, by the multiplicity of rival modes, mingling and following on each other's heels "as swift as lightning." Shawls, especially, gave matter for the fashionmonger's pen. They were worn scarfwise, skilfully draped on the shoulders, and gathered over the arms, the ends floating on the breeze. There was every variety of gay-hued shawl, flame colour, orange, or apricot, with black or white Greek-patterned borders. They were tried in every shape, of every stuff, and every shade; they were made in cloth, in cashmere, in serge, in knitted silk, and, most general of all, in grey rabbit wool. There were square shawls, and pointed shawls, wrap shawls, summer and winter shawls. The fashionable fair had begun to veil their charms, and the buskin footgear gradually disappeared.

As for masculine attire, towards the middle of the year VII,—the following sketch is pencilled from the head downwards:

1799

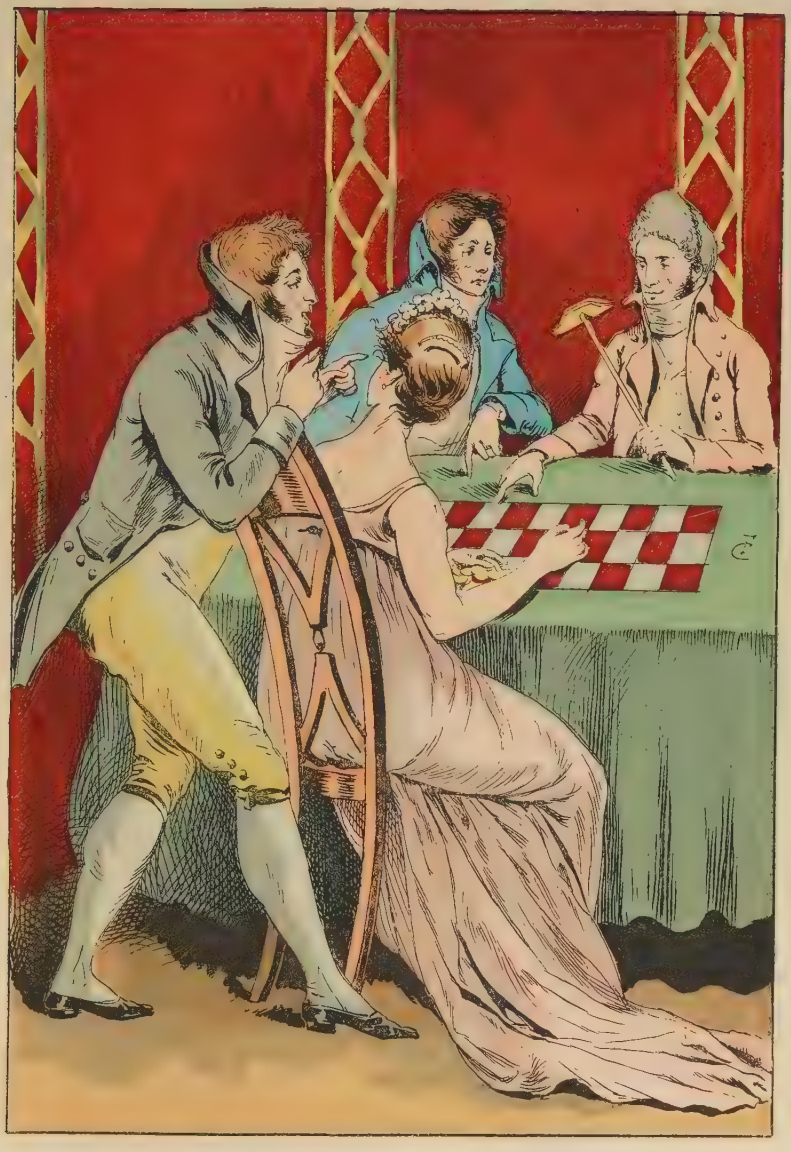
The hat, of medium height, has a narrow brim, raised at the sides, and depressed at back and front. The hair is still worn *à la Titus*, to suit the whiskers, which reach midway down the cheek, and occasionally grow even beneath the chin. Correctness demands that the whiskers should be black, even though the rest of the hair be fair; and the *Impossibles* have more than one means at command to fulfil the dictate of fashion.

The neckcloth is a high one, invariably white, and tied in a long rat-tailed bow. It buries the neck up to the ears. The plaited shirt is of fine cambric, and shows through the widely cut opening of the vest.

The coat is usually dark brown, with a black or violet collar, and buttoned across with plain metal buttons. The very close-fitting trousers are of chamois-coloured kerseymere, down the seams runs a narrow gold braid, like that on a hussar's pantaloons. Fashion exacts the exhibition of a huge official-looking seal, attached to the end of the watch-chain;

A GATHERING IN THE LUXEMBOURG GARDENS

Year VIII (*1800*).



A GAMBLING HELL IN THE PALAIS-ROYAL.

Year VIII (1800).

the walking-stick is replaced by a small and unpretentious bamboo cane; the soft leather boots reach half-way up the calf. For dancing, a dress coat, coloured breeches, and shoes are *de rigueur*. The favourite colours for trousers are canary yellow and bottle green!

1799

So many were the vagaries of fashion between 1795 and 1799, that two thick octavo volumes would scarcely suffice for the description of their different peculiarities, and principal alterations. Even the clever and delicate pencil of Mercier, which reproduced, with so rapid a touch, the various phases of Parisian life, seemed put out of countenance by the rapid changes in feminine attire.

"A few days since," he says, "the lady's figure was heart-shaped, now her stays end in butterfly's wings (an insect the sex would seem to desire to imitate in every way, and which it always selects as its model). Yesterday, all the bonnets were *à la Paméla*, to-day they are all *à l'Anglaise*. Yesterday, the ladies were adorned with feathers, flowers, and ribbons, or else a handkerchief, twisted turbanwise, transformed them into *odalisques*; to-day their caps are all of the shape worn by the wife of Philippe de Commines. Yesterday their shoes were loaded with rosettes, and fastened round the ankle with ribbons skilfully tied; now a great spangled buckle almost entirely covers their feet, so that nothing appears save the end of an embroidered spray of flowers, upon the toe of a tiny shoe. And let no man take this for a caricature; it is the merest sketch of their follies, and infinitely various transitions."

The Merveilleuses survived the Incroyables by a couple of years. That whimsical dame, Mme. Tallien, in whom they were so gracefully personified, supplied the latest exemplification of their style. She appeared at Barras' reception, towards the close of 1799, in a very wide muslin gown, falling about her in great folds, and cut after the pattern of the tunics seen on Greek statues. The sleeves were caught to her arms with antique cameos, and other cameos clasped her garment at the shoulders and waist. She wore no gloves, and one of her arms was adorned with an enamelled golden serpent, the head formed out of an emerald.

Jewels were worn in shoals—on arms and fingers, round the neck, in diadems for the hair, and aigrettes on turbans. Nobody has an idea of the quantities of gems then generally displayed. Exceedingly long neck chains, falling to the knee, and looped again below the bust, were worn by most women. Rows of diamonds and precious stones encircled their throats. Their girdles were set with gems, and pearls meandered hither and thither over their gauzy gowns, and through their tresses. Cameos, too, which had been brought into prominence by Mme. Bonaparte, on her return from Italy, adorned both heads and shoulders. Even wigs were to be seen, enriched with jewelled devices, and with those diamond doves known as *esprits*.

A certain dramatic author of the name of Favières, celebrated in his day, describes the charm of the ladies amongst whom he moved, in a letter, written in Fructidor 1798, to a very close friend, the Citoyenne Bazin, then settled at Rouen. From it we quote the following passage:

"Parisian women are enchantingly dressed, my dear sister. Sleeves only reach to within five or six inches of the elbow. Belts are formed of ribbons crossed behind, passed under the arms and round the shoulders, and fastened with a rosette at the side. The short waists add extraordinarily to the height even of the shortest woman. Almost everybody goes on foot; many, decked out like nymphs, lift their petticoats and gowns at one side, the gathered folds hanging gracefully over the arm, the leg uncovered to the knee in front, and showing rather more than the calf behind.

"To sum it up, they have, we must confess it, a languid grace, a charm, a coquetry, a roguish and inviting air, that would tempt a hermit to his ruin. The fair wig still holds sway, and nothing is seen but lawn, gauze, or crape. Shoes are worn low, and apple green in colour; stockings are white silk, with embroidered coloured satin clocks, pink or lilac; hats very broad and flat, quite round, falling on each side like a parasol, trimmed with great bows of ribbon. . . . I assure you that anybody who desires to look like them must see their attire, and copy it. Description is worth nothing compared with ocular demonstration."

Anglomania raged, swaying fashion and habits just as powerfully as the mania for the antique.

In the eyes of certain fashionable ladies, nothing that was not in vogue in London could be either pretty or in good taste. So much so that certain French tradeswomen crossed the Channel, so as to be sure

LITTLE PATRIOTS

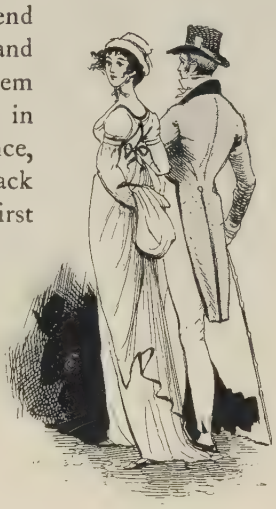
Year VIII (1800).

A PUBLIC ROOM AT FRASCATI'S

Year VIII (1800).

of giving satisfaction to their customers. Beyond French borders they found the establishment of the famous milliner, Mlle. Bertin, once in Paris, besides those of numerous *émigrées*, who had set up in the same line, and had succeeded in popularising, for the benefit of others, the exquisite taste of which they had given proof in their own persons, at the French Court.

From the Country of the Fogs came our wadded pelisses, with velvet borders, our fur-trimmed spencers, open at the neck, and showing the bare skin, which gave their wearers a sham Polish air; our peasant caps and dolmans (in France spelt *dolimans*), and a multitude of fairly pleasing styles. Drawn bonnets of lawn, or lace, with beaded gimps, were welcomed towards the end of the year VII. They were worn in white and pink, in jonquil yellow, and in blue. With them came in the apron-scarf, which matched the bonnet in colour. This did duty as scarf and girdle at once, and was, in the first instance, fastened at the back with ribbons or rosettes. These scarves might at first sight appear a superfluous luxury, but, as one writer on fashion points out, "When we come to consider the transparent texture of the dress, which frequently served for chemise as well, we shall grant that the scarf partakes of the utility conceded to the apron of the savage."



1799

Towards the close of the Directory the Citoyen Lucas Rochemont, "an admirer of the fair sex," dreamt of opening a fashion competition amongst the real leaders of French fashion—the style obtaining the prize to be named after its inventor. He suggested his ingenious plan to La Mésangère, in the following letter:

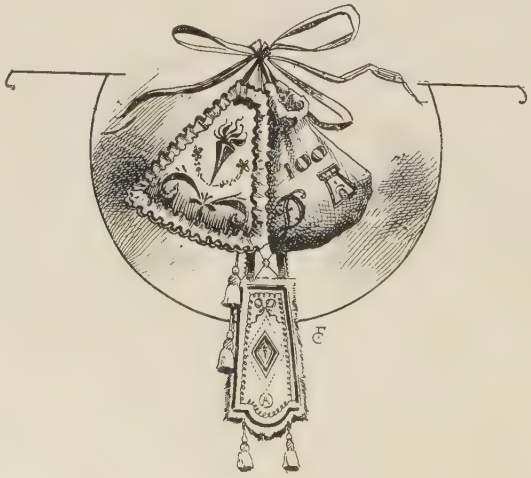
"Citizen, you speak from time to time of the wonders of Fashion, her multiple forms, her astounding triumphs. But you keep silence concerning the seductive creatures who open so brilliant a career before her. What, indeed, would Fashion be, without the charming sex which causes Fashion to be admired? Nothing but a fugitive slipping from sight. But Fashion owes everything—her elegance, her splendour, her simplicity, to the Fair. Without their assent nothing can be right, nothing can be beautiful. Is it not good taste which authorises such and such a vagary of Fashion? And is not good taste the seal of beauty? This being so, I would have you, Citizen,

whenever a new fashion is bestowed on us, do justice where justice is due, and give the name of the lady who invents it; this would be a means of stirring emulation; it would enable us to learn the name of the person to whom we owe any particular change in ladies' attire, and it would open the gates of a temple, wherein each one of us might lay his incense at the feet of the goddess of his choice."

This quaint project came to nothing, and it is a pity, for, apart from some score of pretty women in the circle of *Notre Dame de Thermidor*, who attained more or less notoriety, hardly any names of fashionable women of the Directory period have come down to us.

These Nymphs and Merveilleuses are all anonymous; these Greek and Roman beauties are all closely veiled; and as few anecdotes are to be gathered concerning them, as concerning the spruce little *grisettes* of the Prés-Saint-Gervais. The "proud and majestic beauties" who bore the names of Calypso, Eucharis, or Phryne, exposed all their charms to the Apollos of their day, under the seven-coloured lamps of Frascati's yews. But very few individual figures remain to us of all who took part in that long-drawn Republican masquerade in the gardens of Armida. The magic philtre which brightened their charms and gave them eternal youth, has blended them into one confused vision of fancy and seduction.

But be that as it may, the extravagant fashions which, so to speak, "opened the ball" in the new society—those wild, incoherent, inconceivable fashions which our hurrying pen has attempted to describe—fashions justly worn by *Impossibles*, may be taken as the types, fundamental and transitory, which have influenced the civilian dress of the whole of this nineteenth century.



A WALK IN THE TUILERIES GARDENS

A Dandy of the Year VIII.

THE PICTURE EXHIBITION AT THE « SALON »

Year VIII (*1800*).

Preparing for Conquest, 1800

CHAPTER II

THE DAWN OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE FAIR SEX IN THE YEAR VIII

REPORT speaks of no abnormal event, no festival, no special public function, as marking the opening of the present century in France. The month of January 1800 began on the 2nd Nivôse, year VIII. Paris presented, at that moment, a somewhat curious spectacle.

An edict published by the "Bureau Central" had decreed the closing of all theatres and public dances, at ten o'clock in the evening, and the world of pleasure-seekers was agitated beyond expression. This revolution in the public habits became the burning question of the day. The tyrannical edict was the sole topic of conversation, in clubs, cafés, restaurants, and every meeting-place in Paris. What was to be done? People resolved to sup after the play, as folk had supped in the gay days under the Regent Orleáns. The smart coquettes and white-robed goddesses of society adorned their boudoirs for these nocturnal gatherings. The dainty houris of another sphere laid themselves out to attract the idle youth of the city

during the hours of darkness. In every corner these evening hospitalities were practised, for the fair Parisian, then as now, loved to sit up late, divert herself in gay company, and play her game of *bouillotte* or *reversi*. No sign appears, in the still faint dawn of this wonderfully prolific century of ours, of any pause for rest or reflection, or serious thought, on the part of the French nation. Then, even as now, it was changeable, and gay to carelessness, beginning and ending all things with a song, and, with a song again, seeking fresh pastures.

Yet the world went in crowds to see the exhibition of Gobelins Tapestries in the Great Court of the Natural History Museum; and to the exhibition of pictures by living artists, where the principal gallery was filled with the *chefs d'œuvre* of the great masters of that date, almost all of them devoted to mythological subjects. The sauntering Paris public, with its quick feeling for beauty, delighted in the pictured allegories and mythological love tales, the glimpses of Olympus, the portraits of well-known actresses, painted by the artists of the new school. And these presentments of Danaë, and Mars, and Venus, had their effect even on the current fashions. Thus Gérard's Psyché led ladies who hungered after male admiration to abandon rouge, and cultivate an "interesting pallor."

The theatres were largely attended. By a strange coincidence, almost every play represented the home life of some special class of the inhabitants of Paris. Thus, in 1800, at the Théâtre Feydeau, the play was "L'Auteur dans son ménage." At the Jeunes Artistes, "Le Peintre chez lui." At the Ambigu-Comique, "L'Acteur dans son ménage" had just been given with much success, and at the Opéra Comique, "Laure, ou l'Actrice chez elle," was shortly to be performed by the Citoyenne St. Aubin. After the Citoyen Gosse had introduced the poet in his home life to the theatre-going public, all his fellow writers, eager for fleeting laurels, followed in his wake, and we may wonder that the tradesman, the musician, and the journalist, surrounded by their offspring, were not all of them put in turn upon the stage.

A posthumous work by Fabre d'Eglantine, "Les Précepteurs," also won great applause at the Théâtre Français, under the Republic.

Dress and fashion were still the favourite occupation of the fair. In spite of hostile outcry, the jade invariably triumphs over her scorners, and those detractors who fail in their attempts to touch her skirts. "The very lady," so an anonymous writer of the year VIII assures us, "who complains so loudly of the tyranny of fashion, keeps her milliner out of her bed all night, because she has seen ten bonnets like her own at

Frascati's the night before. In former days," he continues, "Fashion had a settled place of origin, a centre, and fixed periods of existence. Now it springs up, I know not where; it is supported, I know not by whom; and ends, I know not how! . . . Let any extravagant individual take it into his head to attract remark, any shopkeeper desire to use up his odds and ends of stuff, any workwoman have a fancy to outstrip her competitors, whether the fashion be in coats, or hats, or gowns—hey! presto! the novelty is launched! Next morning, thirty Paul Prys will have dubbed the fashion new; the day after, it is acclaimed the most enchanting thing on earth, and on the third, some new mania has wiped the masterpiece out of all memory.

1800

"Zélis," continues the critic, to complete the portrait, "has just married a great army contractor. Nobody, till lately, had ever given a thought to her eyes, her general appearance, or her wit; but her veil, her carriage and horses, and her last ball, have transformed her into a regular lady of fashion. She is wild about pictures. She has had her boudoir decorated three times over. She loves good music, and has a box at the Opéra Comique. As for the learned sciences—she has never missed a single balloon ascent! And further, Zélis has servants with whom she finds fault, *protégés* whom she brings forward, creditors whom she does not pay, a husband whom she keeps waiting, jewels and a lover, all of which are changed according to her whim."

This sketch, in the manner of La Bruyère, is at once satirical and true to nature. The fair dames of the year VIII sought not for sentiment, and cared nothing for wit. Their sole speculation was how best to please. Nobody cared a jot about their talents, nor their conduct; all the stronger sex considered was their kindness, and their physical charm. Having exhausted every spell of art, they relied solely on their natural powers, and, having nothing left to hide, they showed their all unblushingly. Thanks to the feminine habit of going almost naked, the importance of physical outline had so increased (according to the observers of that period), that it would have gone hard if general effect had not counterbalanced possible faults of detail. A woman whose face is plain may have so magnificent a bust; those who fail as to the bust may have such exquisite arms; those who have neither a fine figure nor good arms, may have such splendid hips, such a perfect

expression, *une nuque si tentante !* Youth reigned supreme in 1800, from sixteen up to sixty ! At one moment these aspirants to androgynous charms were seized with a mania for dressing themselves in disguises, and many of the more eccentric donned male attire. A certain number of easygoing admirers of the fair sex applauded this innovation, which they attributed to the difficulty of finding a male escort, with whom to lounge about the city. Frequently, therefore, two ladies might be seen in company, one garbed as a gentleman, in frockcoat, pantaloons, and boots, the other dressed, or rather half-dressed, like a Hebe, and delighted to flaunt herself at ball or play, and at the hours when folly riots wildest, on the arm of a little scapegrace, whose bold demeanour, and doubtful talk, tickled her easy mirth.

1800

And true to their part, these female beaux flitted boldly from one charmer to another, ogling, pinching, chattering, like the little monsters they were. Meanwhile, severe critics vowed, with faces veiled in shame at such wild tricks, that these bold Republican dames were as Greek in their misconduct as in their dress, and, like Sappho, had assumed the masculine garb for no good purpose.

The female imitators of the god Mars were frequently to be met with at Frascati's. These were the last of the prosperous days of this place of entertainment. "A stream of human beauty," as the expression of the period has it, was still to be seen flowing through the galleries of Greek and Roman antiquities, spreading through the porticos, into the saloons, and smaller chambers, pouring and winding along the garden alleys, and disappearing at last into the kiosks, where it was lost to sight. The great mirror at the end of the garden reflected, as in a wonderful prismatic vision, the surging crowd of veiled or turbaned heads, of everchanging couples, each whispering and fondly clasped ; while farther off, seated at tables in the open air, thirsty nymphs called for creams and *tutti frutti*, and all the various iced compounds then so eagerly consumed.

In the daytime folks walked and drove to the Panorama, then just opened, which gave a general view of Paris. This new and strange-looking circular building, without a single window, amused the whole

IN THE GALLERY OF THE PALAIS-ROYAL.

Year VIII (1800).

THE TUILERIES IN 1802.

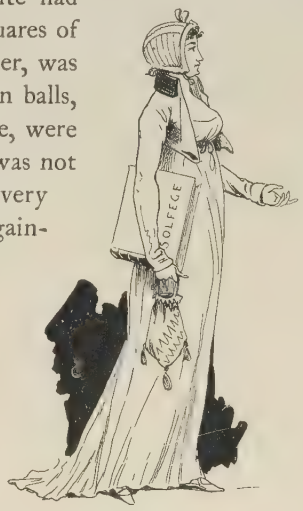
Below the River Terrace.

idle population, and became quite a place of importance. The Théâtre des Troubadours gave a small play on the subject, and in a vaudeville printed in the "Propagateur" which had a great success, the following verses were sung to the tune of *Pour voir un peu comment qu'ça fe'ra.*

Paris pas plus grand que cela
Jouit de succès légitimes.
Un savant vous le montrera
Pour *un franc cinquante centimes.*
Or chacun donne et donnera
Dans le Pano . . . (*bis*) Panorama.

En toile grise on a bâti
De gros murs de pierre de taille.
Moi qui n'ai qu'*un mètre et demi,*
Je suis plus haut que la muraille ;
Aussi je donne pour cela
Dans le Pano . . . (*bis*) Panorama.

Pleasure-seekers still specially affected the neighbourhood of the Palais-Royal. The circus had been burnt down two years previously, and after the 18th Brumaire, the title of Palais-Égalité had disappeared. A garden, consisting of two great squares of greenery, separated by a stone basin filled with water, was laid out within its walls. A certain number of the ten balls, which had been opened in the galleries of the palace, were still carried on. During the morning hours, vice was not in evidence, and the garden was frequented by very respectable people ; but once noon had struck, bargain-makers of all kinds flocked in. Here stockjobbers resorted, to clear their transactions on the Bourse, plotting to send securities up or down, and laying their heads together, like villains in a play, to destroy the stockholder. When darkness fell, the scene changed ; scarcely were the lamps lighted, before the growing crowd began to pour through the galleries, in noisy waves. Many youths, an immense number of military men, a few old rakes, a large proportion of idlers, a small one of serious observers, numerous thieves and pickpockets, and scores of disreputable women in the scantiest attire. This was the hour for which every appetite, every vice, and every interest, had called a meeting, where



1800

every man elbowed and jostled, and meddled with his neighbour, while courtesans shot shameless glances, and thieves plied nimble fingers.

1801

"There is an alliance, offensive and defensive," writes Sellèque, "between the priestesses of Venus and the light-fingered gentry, and this coalition it is which usually wages war on the handkerchiefs, watches, purses, and pocket-books of the unwary. Any one seeking to establish the truth of this fact must make up his mind to pay the tribute, sooner or later. But in this case, as in many others, nothing is to be gained without some risk."

Piles of little obscene books were sold in the galleries of this home of debauchery, without being tracked by the police. The year VIII will always have a special celebrity in the memories of all who have a taste for delicate confessions and revelations of intrigue ; the names and addresses of all the loose women in the capital were openly sold, in regularly bound lists, giving the price of each individual's favours. The Palais-Royal galleries were crowded, too, by ladies of easy virtue, not actually registered as public courtesans, but living in an indescribable state of promiscuity. Gaming-hells were rampant, and every now and then some unhappy wretch, who had sought eternal peace by his own rash act, was found without their doors, covered with blood, the death-rattle in his throat.

Women, generally speaking, lived in a condition of ruinous idleness, which drove them into every form of sensual indulgence. A life of debasing ease had slowly enervated them, till they had lost all moral sense, all self-restraint, or self-respect. The Revolution had forced them to live in the street ; the home joys, the witty drawing-rooms of former days, the love of things noble and high-souled, it had no power, nor any desire, to bestow. They had no beliefs, no faith, no clear conception of good and evil ; and so, unchecked, they slipped into the life of sensual pleasures, with no special perception of enjoyment, beyond the merest animal gratification.

That fierce Republican, Sébastien Mercier, who was to live until 1814, and who was in a position to bear witness to the disgraceful dissipation of the new *régime*, has added, as a postscript to his "Nouveau Tableau de Paris," the following curious pages on the more than affable nymphs of the year VIII :

"Never have they been more exquisitely dressed, nor in more snow-white garments. Soap has become, at the very least, as indispensable as

bread! They are all draped in transparent shawls, which flutter on their shoulders and their naked bosoms, and clouds of gauze, which rouse our curiosity by concealing half their faces, and dresses which do not prevent their seeming naked. In this sylphlike attire they hurry to and fro, from morning till night. Nothing but these white shadows are to be seen in the streets.

"For them, art is expected to make springtime last for ever. Every dawn brings the signal, or the taste, for some fresh pleasure, some extraordinary sight, some splendid ball, or balloon ascending to the roar of cannon. At all these places the white-robed forms appear in crowds,—pleiads of fair creatures, innocent of powder, whose clipped hair, some twenty years ago, would have marked them out for disgrace and shame. Their figures pass before us like those in a picture. They seem to have no hands, but their eyes speak to us.

"What means this uniformity of dress, these daily walks, this assiduous frequentation of the theatre? The ladies fill almost all the seats, and at night they reappear again, under the lamplight. Do the waters of Pactolus flow through the city of Paris? Who pays for all this dissipation? Are there more millionaires within this capital than in any other? And are these women the only ones on earth who enjoy the privilege of doing no work, and living in a perpetual round of amusement!

1801

"Their three rules—and these are faithfully obeyed—are to read novels, dance, and live in idleness. Twenty years ago, no young girl would have ventured outside her parents' house without her mother: she walked under her mother's wing, and kept her eyes studiously cast down. The only man she dared to look at was him she was allowed to hope for, or choose, as her future husband. The Revolution has swept away all this submission. Young girls go about, both day and night, in perfect freedom. Their sole occupations are to walk and drive, to amuse themselves, to make merry, have their fortunes told, and quarrel over their admirers. Scissors and thimbles are all cast aside. The only pricks they know are those of Cupid's dart, and these are of the slightest. The merest child, as a rule, is fairly healed of them.

"There is not a public promenade," concludes the writer, "where you will not see children of two years old, or thereabouts, sitting on the laps of mothers of eighteen.

"How mighty must be the seductive power of a ribbon, a beflowered bonnet, a spangled gown, in a city where public balls are a permanent institution, and attended, frequently alone, by maidens of twelve years old, whose sole guide is their dancing-master's violin! They mistake debauchery for love, that same debauchery grows systematic, and precocious unions will soon burden us with an enfeebled generation."

1801

The above is certainly one of the best passages left us by that most circumstantial annotator, Sébastien Mercier, and he gives a better picture than any other writer of the condition of morals in the early days of the Consulate, just when the state of libertinage created by the Directory was at its height.

In the person of Napoleon Bonaparte, French society found a reorganiser, who brought the licentious freedom in which the population had run riot, under control, and endowed the nation with its civil rights—more precious to it, a hundredfold, than any right political. Then France, restored to her religious and intellectual traditions, reared herself once more, strong in the absolute certainty of her future.

Little by little, after the eighteenth Brumaire, feminine influence resumed its gentle and consoling sway over social circles, the *salon* was once more held in honour, talk had its chance again, conversation was resumed, after having suffered more than eight years' banishment from its native soil. This return to the habits and intercourse of polite society took place in several houses at once,—round Joséphine's hearth in the First Consul's Court, and more especially in the drawing-rooms of Mme. de Staël, and Mme. Récamier. While Bonaparte was engaged in reconstituting the social edifice on a solid basis, the former Mme. de Beauharnais was gathering all the living intellectual forces of modern France, as well as all its authorised representatives, at her entertainments. She welcomed not only her husband's comrades in

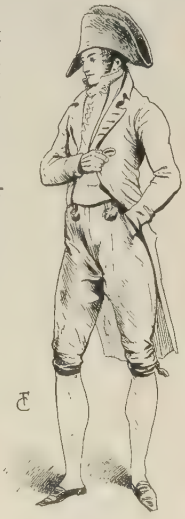
THE PERRON OF THE PALAIS-ROYAL.

(1802).

THE DELIGHTS OF THE MALMAISON

A saunter through the park in 1804.

glory, but the world of artists, learned men, and members of the Institute. While the victor of Lodi governed, she reigned—reigned by dint of charm, or charmed, rather, by dint of conciliation and kindness, by dint, even, of her somewhat childish ways, and innate coquetry. Mme. Bonaparte hardly received at the Tuileries before Ventôse, in the year VIII. The ladies who formed her circle in this *preparatory* period of the Consulate were (according to Mme. d'Abrantès) "Mme. de La Rochefoucauld, little and humpbacked, good-natured, though witty, and related to the hostess; Mme. de La Valette, gentle, kindhearted, and unfailingly pretty; Mme. de Lameth, somewhat roundabout in figure, and hairy as to her chin; Mme. Delaplace, who did everything, even to making her curtsey, mathematically, to please her husband; Mme. de Luçay; Mme. de Lauriston, invariably equal-mannered, and generally liked; Mme. de Rémusat, a very superior woman, whose very curious memoirs are known and appreciated; Mme. de Thalouet, whose recollection of her former beauty was all too keen, and that of its present faded condition not half keen enough; Mme. d'Harville, who was rude on principle, and civil by the merest chance."

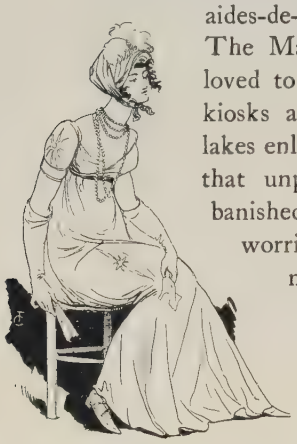


1802

Such, according to Junot's gossip-loving and somewhat malicious spouse, was Joséphine's earliest female circle; but other ladies, young, fair, and charming, soon found their way to the Tuileries, and shone there. Amongst these were Mme. Lannes, magnificently handsome; Mme. Savary, pretty rather than beautiful, but elegant to the point of extravagance in dress; Mme. Mortier, the future Duchesse de Trévise, a gentle, touching figure; Mme. Bessières, gay, even-tempered, coquettish, and really distinguished in appearance; Mlle. de Beauharnais, whose history and qualities are universally known, at the present day; Mme. de Montesson, who entertained most liberally, and invitations to whose Wednesday dinners were greatly sought after, for they were splendidly served. Besides these, there were many other young women, most of them remarkable for their wit, whose names would make up a list far too lengthy for us to inflict upon our readers.

But there was too official a flavour about the gatherings at the Tuileries. It was at the Malmaison that Joséphine and her guests enjoyed the intimacy of a small and merry circle, and the charms of easy conversation. Here they acted plays, and took their pleasures just as in

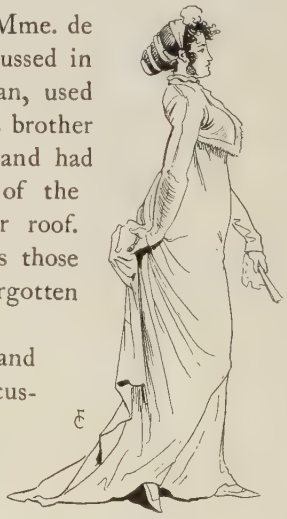
the old Court days at the Trianon. The First Consul was not too proud, when dinner was over, to play a game of prisoner's-base with his aides-de-camp, or even to keep the bank at vingt-et-un. The Malmaison was Joséphine's favourite residence. She loved to wander there with her female friends, amidst her kiosks and sheepfolds and cottages, and round the little lakes enlivened by sailing swans, both black and white. In that unpretentious dwelling, from which all show was banished, she lived the life her heart loved best, far from the worries of the budding Court forced on her by her master's will, and little dreaming that a day would come when State reasons would drive her back, most cruelly and publicly divorced, to this peaceful retreat, as to an exile's dungeon.



1802

Mme. de Staël's *salon*, before she was driven out of Paris by the command of Bonaparte—who showed scant favour to his foremost feminine admirer—was really a sort of *intellectual exchange*, a drawing-room devoted to conversation. Many of its characteristic traits are reproduced in "Delphine."

"She received a great deal of company," writes Mme. de Rémusat, "and all political questions were freely discussed in her house. Louis Bonaparte, then a very young man, used occasionally to visit her, and delighted in the talk. His brother took alarm, forbade him to frequent her company, and had him watched. Literary men, authors, supporters of the Revolution, and *Grands Seigneurs*, all met under her roof. 'That woman,' the First Consul would say, 'teaches those who would never have presumed to think, or have forgotten how to do it, to use their brains.'"



1802

Mme. de Staël delighted in lively conversation, and carried this taste so far as to enjoy listening to discussions in which she took no personal share. "Her guests amused her," writes the Duc de Broglie, "by eagerly broaching all sorts of strange opinions, and this was a pleasure which nobody denied himself. Desperate combats were waged, mighty thrusts were dealt in her presence, but no grudge was ever borne. . . . Her *salon* was like that Hall of Odin, in the Scandinavian Paradise, where slain warriors rise to their feet, and recommence the fray." Yet

THE WOODEN GALLERY IN THE PALAIS-ROYAL

(1803).

AN OFFICIAL BALL IN THE STRASBOURG THÉATRE
(*1805*).

Mme. de Staël did not retain under the Consulate the strong political influence she had wielded in the *Cercle Constitutionnel*, presided over by her friend, Benjamin Constant. All those who attended her gatherings were looked on with suspicion, and, as a matter of prudence, the courtiers of the future Emperor avoided the *côterie* ruled by the author of the "Lettres sur Rousseau." A remarkable drawing by Debucourt, now in the Hennin collection at the Bibliothèque Nationale, represents a gathering round Mme. de Staël on a fine summer's evening, in the Luxembourg Gardens. She is surrounded by gentlemen and ladies, and the conversation appears to be of the most eager description.

1802

Mme. Récamier's *salon* in the Rue de Mont-Blanc, and, later on, at Clichy-la-Garenne, was more exclusively literary in tone than that of the famous Delphine. It furnished a really neutral meeting-place for every party, seeing politics were never discussed within its walls. The brilliant beauty of the hostess made her as famous as her talents rendered her attractive. The portraits left us by Gérard and David help us to understand the admiration she aroused, wherever she carried the bloom of her eighteen summers, and the charm of her exquisite smile. Just at that period, when society seethed with so many adverse interests and hostile passions, such various professions of conduct, and such exaggerated claims of every kind, every social gathering ran the risk of disturbance, and good manners were not yet sufficiently re-established to remove the constant danger of collision, offence, and open hurts to personal vanity, given and received. Mme. Récamier had the special gift of carrying peace, concord, and goodwill, into the circle over which her beauty reigned supreme. There was a moment, in her *salon*, when the proud sensitiveness of literary men had to contend with the arrogance of the military element, but the charming hostess herself steadily set talent before official rank, and preferred the single-hearted artist to the mere courtier.

"Mme. Récamier," so writes the author of the "Salons de Paris," "was the first person who opened her house and regularly received company. In the first place, she entertained largely by virtue of her husband's position; in the second, she had an existence of her own, another kind of social intercourse, with men who both knew life and

understood it. She had a natural taste for good company, and a love and desire for the most refined. She sought for enjoyment within her own dwelling, the luxury of which she desired to share with others, and her heart longed for true friendship. She ended by forming a circle of her own, and from that moment, in spite of her youth, she had the honour of being considered the pattern and model of her sex."

In her drawing-room were to be seen Garat, the singer, whose exquisite voice was universally praised and admired; M. Dupaty, Hoffmann, Benjamin Constant, and M. Després, with his spiteful jokes; the Montmorencys, Adrien and Mathieu, M. de Bouillé, and often, too, M. de Chateaubriand—the great friend, almost the demi-god, of a later period—with M. de Bonald, M. de Valence, M. Ouvrard, Lucien Bonaparte, and all the best-bred and most courteous-mannered men of that day—those who aspired to the very quintessence of refinement. Generals, ambassadors, royalists, and partisans of the late Revolution, here met on friendly ground, their political passions all, seemingly, put away. Mme. de Staël seldom failed to attend the informal entertainments of her young rival, whose superior intelligence, beauty, modesty, and absolutely virtuous conduct, she was the first to acknowledge. Among the ladies who frequented this social circle we may mention Lady Holland, Mme. de Krüdener, Mlle. de Sévrieux, Mme. Junot, Mme. Visconti, Lady Yarmouth, and every notable person, in fact, in Parisian society, whether foreign or native born.

1802

At Mme. Récamier's house were given the first regular private balls which took place after the Revolution. These festivities were eagerly looked for. The charming hostess had a talent for providing a constant change of amusement. One night she would give a concert, another she would have a reading, another a little play acted between two folding screens. Her guests had not only the pleasure of receiving the simplest and most charming of welcomes, they had the delight, too, of admiring their young and lovely entertainer, as she danced some Southern step to her tambourine, or performed the figures of the Shawl Dance, which she had invented for herself, and which showed off all the perfection of her splendid bust and uncovered arms, and the exquisite proportions of her figure, beneath the folds of the classic tunic, wreathed with flowers and veiled with lace. The old

Chevalier de Boufflers, whose name the First Consul had just struck off the list of the proscribed, and who had come back to France to brighten up his mind, declared he had "never seen a woman dance better *with her arms!*"

1803

Another *salon*, less brilliant, but which wielded an influence of its own, was that of Mme. de Genlis, at the Arsenal. This indomitable Blue-stocking was close on sixty years of age. Bonaparte, who did not consider either her talents or her opinions likely to do him any injury, had recalled her from exile, and given her rooms in the Arsenal Library, with a liberal pension, and leave to take any books she needed from the library shelves. Mme. de Genlis received on Saturdays, and every week the literary and artistic world flocked to her hospitable door. The guests composed and acted proverbs, and made music. Sometimes Millevoye, the melancholy young poet, whose mournful and touching voice suited so well with his disconsolate countenance, would recite some chill and gloomy elegy, which brought tears to the ladies' eyes. Sometimes Dussault, with his somewhat pedantic air, would read aloud his critical articles for the *Journal des Débats*, or some of his thoughts on literature, in its connection with social institutions. Comte Elzéar de Sabran, Mme. de Custine's brother, often repeated his own fables with great success. M. Fiévée gave the plot of his "Dot de Suzette," and Mme. de Montesson's niece was always more than ready to contribute readings from her own novels, in course of publication. Many of the audience, such as Chaptal, La Harpe, Fontanes, the Comte de Ségur, Radet, Sabattier de Castres, Choiseul-Gouffier, Cardinal Maury, and M. de Talleyrand, were connected with the Academy.

1803

All the women were Blue-stockings, of various shades, of course. There were Mme. de Chastenay, the "adapter" of foreign novels; the Comtesse Beaufort d'Hautpoul, who adored all the Muses; Mme. Kennen, the novelist; Mme. de Vannoz, authoress of a poem called "La Conversation," a pretty though pale imitation of Delille; and Mme. de Choiseul-Meuse, a lady of very pleasant wit, who was not above writing humorous tales, which were

a distant echo of the indelicate witticisms of certain eighteenth-century authors.

To sum it up, Mme. de Genlis' entertainments, in spite of their pretension to the "open mind," were very dull, and limited in scope; while, to quote the First Consul's own happy description, the lady of the house, when she desired to define what virtue was, always spoke of the quality as a strange and quite unexpected discovery. Yet another literary *salon*, which enjoyed high favour just at this period, when the love of letters and of arts was beginning to re-awaken in France, was that of Lucien Bonaparte, where Fontanes, Legouvé, Joseph Chénier, and Népomucène Lemercier, Chateaubriand and Dorat-Cubières were constant guests.

1803

Every day fresh houses opened their hospitable doors, and by the close of the Consulate, the official and the financial world of Paris vied with each other in the splendour of their entertainments.

Gallais, a close observer of the habits of the period, thus took note of the singular mania for giving parties. His shrewd remarks might well have been written yesterday: "Persons of large fortune still indulge their petty vanity by entertaining crowds of people. There is a mania for having a great many coaches at one's door, a great many guests at one's table, a mob in one's drawing-room—for having it said 'All Paris was there,' for extorting from those who pass by the rows of lighted windows, the admiring cry, 'How grand! How happy the folk in there must be!' And yet everybody at these parties yawns, and is half dead of boredom, and if it were not for the sorry conceit of being able to say, 'Yesterday I was at the Duc de W——'s ball'; 'I dined with M. de R——,' every one would be too delighted to stay at home."

The two ruling passions of the goddesses of the year VIII were pleasure and glory. The whole existence of Parisian society, once the Consulate was firmly established, was spent, during the daylight hours, in attending reviews and military shows, and watching the victorious troops march through the flower-strewn streets; and, when night fell,

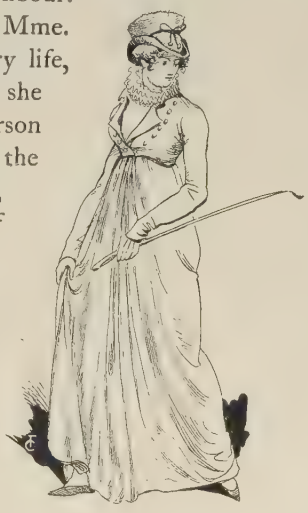
WAITING FOR THE SAINT-CLOUD COACH

Place de la Concorde (1806).

THE SCULPTURE GALLERY IN THE LOUVRE MUSEUM
(*1806*).

in hurrying in and out of theatres, official reception-rooms, and ball-rooms. The First Consul's three sisters, Elisa Baciocchi, Pauline Leclerc, and Caroline Murat, closely followed by Mme. Regnault de St. Jean-d'Angély, Mme. Méchin, Mme. Visconti, and Mme. Hainguerlot, led smart society, and vied with one another in splendour. But these were all outstripped by Mme. Bonaparte, who reigned supreme over fashion's court, and was the acknowledged model of elegance in its most becoming aspects. The returned *émigrés* succeeded in reviving the old Opera Balls, which had disappeared from the list of public entertainments for over ten years. On February 24, 1800, the hall in the Rue Louvois welcomed a crowd of dressed-up maskers, thirsting for noise, and gaiety, and intrigue. Women of every class pondered for days over the preparation of the dominos and masks to be worn at the Carnival Balls, which were of the most brilliant description, and swarmed with whimsical costumes and devices.

Yet the majority of the fair sex appeared in black or coloured dominos. The men were masked and wore evening dress. Bosio has left us an engraving which represents an Opera Ball at its gayest moment. The great object of every masker was to puzzle his or her neighbour. "I have heard," writes Jacob, the book collector, "that Mme. Récamier, who was so charming and attractive in ordinary life, lost all trace of bashfulness once she was masked, though she never could make up her mind to use the second person singular, as is usually done in such cases. Statesmen, the greatest of great ladies, nay, even princes of royal blood, delighted in appearing at these masked balls. One of them, the Prince of Wurtemberg, recognised Mme. Récamier, who, however, refused to acknowledge her identity. He stole a ring from her finger, as her hand lay on his arm, and returned it on the morrow, with the following note: 'To the loveliest, the most charming, but the haughtiest of women, I return the ring she deigned to confide to my care at the last ball.'"



1803

If contemporary evidence is to be believed, this Opera Ball was patronised by the best society, and bore its seal until the close of the Empire.

The few *émigrés* who had been able to return openly, had imported some confusion into fashionable attire. Some still patronised bag-wigs and lace ruffles; others powdered their hair; others wore a pig-tail. There were squabbles between the hairdressers of the old *régime* and

those of the new. Bonaparte's own style favoured that which was known as the "Titus." The older-fashioned and obstinate folk looked like masqueraders, when they appeared in the streets.

1803

Even women whose taste and vanity inclined them to the old style, opposed all powder, for the thought that the retrograde movement might affect them too, and find its way from their admirers' curled and powdered locks, back to hoops and paniers, filled them with alarm. And there was reason in this fear, for certain dowagers of Louis XV.'s Court were loud in their assertions that no woman could look pretty in Greek or Roman garb, and that depraved morals had come in with short cropped hair and clinging garments.

The younger opposition was headed by Mme. Bonaparte. It was her natural instinct to defend good taste and gracefulness. And further, she hated restraint and official formality, and trembled at the thought of wearing stiff and uncomfortable clothes. Dress was, indeed, one of the chief occupations of her life. But her soul longed for short-waisted gowns, of supple material, cut either high or low; she loved to dress her hair in the Roman fashion, with a coronet, or bind her head with fillets under a golden network. We cannot picture Joséphine in a powdered wig and flounced skirts. She had none of the dainty, delicate graces of the women of the Court of Louis XVI. Her full charms needed no stiff-lined garments to support them. Her exuberant style of beauty appeared to far the greatest advantage in a cashmere gown, like the tunic of some classic dame, that followed every outline, and left her neck and arms exposed to view. The innumerable dresses made for her by Leroy or Mlle. Despaux were always, in spite of the extreme richness of their trimmings, of the simplest, though most skilful cut, well suited to the voluptuous curves of her figure. The most conscientious disciples of fashion under the Consulate wore long skirts of exceedingly fine India muslin, half trained, and embroidered all round the hem, which Mlles. Lolive and Beuvry, the fashionable makers of the day, had a genius for producing. Their stockings were embroidered with wreaths of vine leaves, oak leaves, laurel leaves, jasmine or nasturtiums. Their bodices were made separate from the skirts. They were cut in the shape of "spencers," and were known as "canezous," a scalloped embroidery called "amadis" was carried round the edges and wrists. The collar

was generally trimmed with needle point, or with the finest Mechlin lace. On the head was worn a black velvet cap with two white feathers ; the shoulders were covered by a splendid cashmere shawl, of some brilliant colour ; sometimes a long veil of point d'Angleterre was fastened to the headgear, and allowed to fall on one side. This put the finishing-touch to the most elegant costume that could then be devised. Full coats were also to be seen, of India muslin lined with marceline, and embroidered all over with scattered flowers or stars. In the early days of the Consulate, all the ladies came out, as if by agreement, in snow-white garments.

By degrees, the "Titus" style of hairdressing died out, and graduated ringlets were worn, some tendrils of hair being brought down over the forehead. Turbans, and satin hats and bonnets, returned to favour. Almost all of them were white. I give a few valuable notes on the costume of the day, culled from La Mésangère :

"Veils are still worn on the head, and half scarves of tulle, pulled forward over the cheeks. Bonnets of crape or sarsenet, carelessly draped, a few English bonnets with round flat crowns, the brims very broad in front, and following the shape of the crown so as to frame the face and project far beyond it. A few heads *à la Titus*, a great many with long hair, dressed, as it is called, *à la Chinoise*, the hair brought up to the top of the head, and knotted there.

"For morning wear, there are morning caps, loosely fastened under the chin, or close caps of embroidered tulle, occasionally with a long and wide lappet twisted twice round them. For riding, long-haired beaver hats, reddish-grey in colour, the brim turned up, sometimes on the right side, sometimes on the left, and sometimes in front, and adorned with one or two curled ostrich feathers of the same shade." Such were the principal styles of headgear at the beginning of the present century.

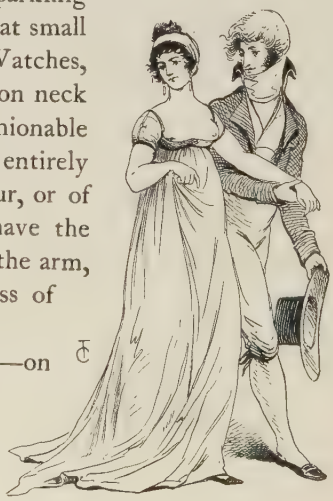
1804

In jewellery, there was a great sale, so we learn, for crosses outlined with pearls or diamonds, and bracelets made of a gold ribbon, in a knitted pattern. Combs of antique pattern still kept the jewellers' fingers busy. Day by day the ornamentation on the upper part of these combs grew more elegant, and purer in design. They were set with diamonds and other precious stones, and cameos. Pelisses were coming into general use. They were worn long, almost reaching the ground, with wide sleeves turned back over

the wrists, and round cape collars. The favourite colours were "florentine bronze," dark wallflower, brown, deep blue, or puce. Spencers, generally made of black sarsenet, had very small lapels, and round collars. After the long cashmere shawls, and the square cloth ones embroidered in gold, the most fashionable were those in muslin, half as long again as they were wide, dyed red crimson, brown of the shade known as *terre d'Egypte*, or full blue, and edged with a coloured silk border in crochet. Several manufacturers in the neighbourhood of Paris sent out shawls dyed with large patterns which went by the name of Turkish shawls, because the designs on them were of an Oriental character. For half-dress, some very smart ladies had three-cornered scarves of tulle, poppy coloured, amaranth or deep green, embroidered in white.

1804

Fans were made of black, white, or brown crape, embroidered with gold, silver, or steel spangles. These embroideries took the form of arabesques, weeping willows, cascades and sparkling sheaves. The fans they adorned were somewhat small in size, not over five or six inches in length. Watches, with dials enamelled with flowers, and hung on neck chains, were more than ever favoured by the fashionable ladies. Gloves were very long, without buttons, entirely covering the arm, and were white, straw colour, or of an exquisite shade of faded green. Never have the long wrinkled gloves been more becoming to the arm, or more completely in harmony with the dress of their fair wearers.



1804

Fashion had laid its hand on everything—on the speech, the food, the furniture of the period. To such a point was the variety of luxury carried by the rich, that a lady dressed in the Roman style felt herself obliged to receive her guests in rooms decorated to match, and, as a matter of correctness, to make the daily toilette of her apartments harmonise with that of her own person. If she chose Greek attire, her furniture must forthwith be in the Greek

style. If she donned the Eastern turban and pelisse, at once her boudoir glowed with brilliant Turkish couches and bright rugs. If she robed herself like an Egyptian, that instant the sphinx, the monolith clock, the mummies, even, emerged from their retirement, and the apartment was straightway transformed into the semblance of an Oriental tent. The piece of furniture on which the most attention was lavished was the bed. It was boat-shaped as a rule, of lemon wood or mahogany, and adorned with pure gold mounts, exquisitely chiselled. The curtains were made of cashmere shawls, and India muslin edged with lace. The pillows were covered with point d'Angleterre, the quilt was of embroidered satin. People often spent ruinous sums on a state-bed.

1804

On reception-days, every room was open and lighted up, so that, while the hostess was tied to the drawing-room by her hospitable cares, her guests could wander at will, and gaze in admiration at her antique couches, her Greek saloon, her Roman bed, and her Chinese boudoir.

Society was still in a fluid condition, and of the most mixed description. The line of demarcation between what was known in old days as *good* company, and *bad*, was almost imperceptible. In public places, fashionable ladies and courtesans, nobles and *parvenus*, elbowed each other unconcernedly. As society no longer marked the various ranks, each individual was forced to guard his own with jealous care.

A great dinner, in those days, was nothing (if contemporary witness is to be believed) but a huge gathering of people, who either had never met before, or did not dare to acknowledge where their first acquaintance had been made ; a mere collection of individuals whom chance or difference of opinion should have parted for ever ; an omnium-gatherum, no member of which dared inquire who his neighbour might be ; a chaos, wherein all parties, though seemingly fused at first, ended, in the heat of argument, by showing their true colours ; women, who boasted at the top of their voices of things at the secret doing of which they would have blushed, in days gone by ; noisy, quarrelsome young men, fops beyond all conception—a confused Babel, that jabbered in deafening chorus, of politics and fashions, of pleasure parties and love affairs, of speculations and of theatres.

At Shrovetide, and on such festive occasions, all the places of public entertainment swarmed with an eddying crowd. Every alley, every street, was choked by maskers, more or less entertaining, more or less absurd, whom the crowd greeted with shouts of delight almost amounting to folly, or even madness. Every little inn was turned into a temple of Bacchus, wherein his attendant priestesses ran riot; every wine-shop was a noisy scene of orgie, where coarse jokes tickled the antic crowd to fits of vulgar laughter. In every house, almost, a masked ball was in progress, and all the denizens of Paris, from the richest to the poorest, honoured the season by some special merry-making. Everywhere there were family dinners, carnival gatherings, at which Folly (as the phrase then went) tinkled her bells furiously, and turned every head. Laughter, and gaiety, and dancing wiped out all past suffering and present misfortune, and bereft the wild merrymakers of every sensation save that of their own mad enjoyment. The ordinary fare of the humbler class, the leg of mutton and potatoes, and goblet of cold water, was scorned, and banished from every table. Its place was supplied by the well-fattened turkey, washed down with draughts of cheap wine, while the delicately stuffed goose proudly drove the now despised chicken from the board of even the modest and unassuming citizen. The opulent class, too, not a whit less extravagantly foolish than that whose pleasures and desires are so often, alas, checked by its poverty, cast off all pride and haughtiness, plunged yet more greedily into pleasure—and the luxury indulged in, while gratifying feminine caprice and the general love of show, to a most ruinous extent, certainly supplied the onlooker with many an enchanting sight, full worthy his surprise and delighted admiration.

1804

"Persons who had grown rich by means of the Revolution, began to take up their residence in the great houses sold by their owners in the Faubourg St. Germain." Thus Chateaubriand, in his "Mémoires d'Outre-tombe": "These Jacobins, in process of becoming counts and barons, were never tired of dilating on the horrors of 1793, on the necessity of keeping the lower classes under, and putting down all popular excesses. Bonaparte, having enrolled these classic heroes in his police force, was soon to deck them with ribbons and orders, and disguise them under titles of nobility.

A CHECK IN THE PARK AT BAGATELLE

Hunting dress 1807.

THE BOULEVARD "DES PETITS SPECTACLES"
(*1808*).

"Amidst them all a sturdy generation was springing up. It had been sown in blood, and was to grow up to spill blood—the blood of the foreigner alone. Day by day the metamorphosis from Republicanism into Imperialism, from universal tyranny into single despotism, was being accomplished."

Let us then pass on to the Empire, and let us, amid the stately surroundings of that superb and epic period, review its chief changes, and the most famous of the feminine figures who lent those changes their chief charm and glory.

CHAPTER III

UNDER THE FIRST EMPIRE

FEMININE SPLENDOUR IN COURT AND CITY

LIVELY enough, in its own way, and by no means swallowed up in pomps and vanities, was the Empress Joséphine's own personal circle, that which, during the earlier days of the Empire period, gave the law, in some vague fashion, to current taste, and whose half-expressed behest affected even those far removed from its immediate presence. Gaiety, good-nature, even frivolity, were the rule. The palace intrigues which were, in later days, to render the Imperial Court so dangerous a place of residence, one so beset with pitfalls for unwary courtiers, were a growth of later date. At this period, a few soldiers, men of letters, and of science, gathered at supper in the Tuileries, some once or twice a week.

The guests, according to Mme. de Rémusat (always so exact as to the details of daily life in the Tuileries), arrived at 8 o'clock. They were richly garbed, but Court dress was not expected. Card-playing went on in the ground-floor drawing-room, afterwards used by

Mme. Mère. When Bonaparte made his appearance, all proceeded into another room, where a concert, lasting about half an hour, was performed by Italian singers. The party then returned to the drawing-room, and cards began again. The Emperor moved about, or talked, or played, as the fancy took him. At eleven o'clock a profuse and very splendid supper was served. The ladies only were seated. Bonaparte's chair remained empty. He stood about near the table, never ate anything, and retired as soon as supper was over. These small receptions were always attended by the Princes and Princesses, the great officers of State, two or three of the Ministers, and several Marshals, generals, and State Councillors, with their wives. There was a great display of toilettes. The Empress, as well as her sisters-in-law, never failed to appear in a new gown, and covered with pearls and precious stones. The pearls in her jewel casket were worth more than a million of francs.

"Ladies were beginning to wear a great many gold and silver spangled stuffs, and turbans were coming into favour at Court. These were made of white or coloured muslin, gold spangled, or of very bright-hued Turkish stuffs. Dress was gradually assuming an Oriental form. The Court ladies wore, over their richly embroidered muslin gowns, shorter garments of coloured materials, open down the front, and leaving the arms, neck, and bosom bare."

The ladies composing the Empress's household were the following: Mme. de La Rochefoucauld, lady in waiting; Mme. de La Valette, lady of the bedchamber; Mme. de Rémusat, Mme. Duchâtel, the Duchesse de Bassano, Mme. d'Arberg, Mme. de Mortemart, Mme. de Montmorency, Mme. de Marescot, Mme. de Bouillé, Mme. Octave de Ségur, Mme. de Chevreuse, Mme. Philippe de Ségur, Mme. de Luçay, Mme. Ney, Mme. Lannes, the Duchesse de Rovigo, Mme. de Montalivet, Mme. de Lauriston, Mme. de Vaux, Mlle. d'Arberg (afterwards Comtesse Klein), Mme. de Colbert, and Mme. de Serant, *dames du palais*. Mme. Gazani was Reader to the Empress. Under the orders of the Lady of the Bedchamber, a first wardrobe woman, Mme. Aubert, had sole care of the whole of the Imperial wardrobe. The Empress also had ushers, and *dames d'annonce*, footmen, and two pages to carry her train when she left her apartments, or got into her carriage. Mme. d'Abrantès, who herself belonged to the household of Mme. Mère, and who eventually shared her husband's dignity as Governor of Paris, has left us some remarks as to the *dames du palais*. From these we learn that, as an ordinary rule, no

ladies appeared at the official Courts held at the Tuileries but those who had been formally presented. They wore full dress, with Court trains of velvet or silk, embroidered with gold or silver, and occasionally enriched with pearls and gems. The men wore uniform, either military or official. Or occasionally—and this the Emperor preferred—they appeared in fanciful Court suits of velvet, silk, or satin, splendidly embroidered, and with swords. There was very little conversation at these ultra-official gatherings. But eyes and ears were all at full stretch. The guests fell into little *côteries*. The old nobility turned up its nose at the *parvenus* of the Empire. And an undercurrent of excitement ran through the rooms. Spite, of one sort or another, rarely slumbered; sharp sayings, innuendoes, teasing glances flew this way and that. A whole knot of families would kindle into fury because some little countess of the new *régime* had deftly contrived to inveigle the acknowledged lover of some marquise of the old *Noblesse* within her fairy circle. The Empress sat, on these occasions, at a whist-table, with the three gentlemen of highest rank and quality. The rest of the company stood round in a circle. The Emperor hardly ever played. He moved from room to room, speaking briefly first to one and then to another, and pausing longest among the ladies, with whom he was fond of joking, in a fashion more remarkable for good humour than for wit or compliment.

1805

Napoleon's feeling for the sex was deeper and more real than his biographers have cared to admit. But he realised the danger of giving way to its wiles. He dreaded its influence and its treachery, and the story of Samson and Delilah was always present to his mind. Always, in his intercourse with women, he played the Conqueror, scorning to lay siege like other men. Instant submission, an assurance that in love, as in battle, the victory was his, was what he sought, and generally found. To sum him up in this particular, he was a sorry lover, more despotic than tender, brutal on occasion, and very often cynical as well, though with a varnish of commonplace morality which he was fond of putting forward. Joséphine, with her trustfulness, her Creole gentleness, her unresisting submission and her tears, was the only woman who succeeded in holding him for any length of time, and even she had to endure the whims of her merciless lord, who

carried his cruelty to the point of stirring her jealousy, by the detailed recital of his successes.

Mlle. Aurillon's "Mémoires" furnish proof of this fact. "The Emperor, whose indulgence of his physical passions was utterly devoid of any more delicate sentiment, never made any difficulty about sacrificing the individuals who had roused his wife's jealousy. He went farther yet, and in this matter I could not do otherwise than strongly disapprove his action. When the Empress referred to such persons, he would tell her more than she desired to know, would even describe their secret blemishes, and, while acknowledging one special peccadillo, would also mention some other Court lady, to whom no reference had been made, as having denied him none of her favours."

1805

It is fair to note that Napoleon was constantly assailed both by *billets doux*, and by more personal advances. His genius, his astounding exploits, and prodigious fortunes, were eminently calculated to kindle the imagination of every woman, married or single, in the universe. And further, his countenance, as Baron Gros' admirable portrait proves, had a beauty of its own, a matchless and never-to-be-forgotten charm, the mighty attraction of which must have been felt by every soul about his Court. It is comprehensible enough, then, that when he became an Emperor, all the *grandes coquettes* of the capital lost their heads.

Constant, the Emperor's valet, who, like other folk, has left his "Mémoires" behind him, denies that he, personally, ever forwarded the innumerable advances that daily beset him, as the great man's confidential servant. "I never would consent," he writes, "to have anything to do with matters of that kind. I was not of sufficiently noble birth to think such an employment could bring me honour." Yet there is no doubt he was indirectly sounded, and even openly solicited, by certain ladies who aspired to the title of Imperial favourites, though the rights and privileges granted to such favourites were, in the Emperor's case, of the scantiest description.

"In spite of the Emperor's taste for reviving the habits of the former Court, the secret privileges of the first *valet de chambre* were never re-established, and I took good care not to claim them, though other persons were less scrupulous." The worthy Constant's dignity is crushing! But the persons composing Bonaparte's circle were

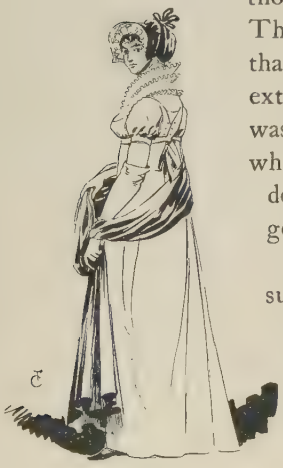
many of them more accommodating, and various tales have come down to us of a thousand and one cases in which the Emperor's greatest generals, and even his nearest female relations, willingly consented to act as intermediaries for the gratification of his fleeting fancies.

1805

The plan of this book does not, however, admit of the recital of these idle amours. The limner of contemporary fashion must tarry on the threshold of the monarch's chamber, and his portraiture should, in fact, be limited to shadowy personalities, such as may serve as suitable pegs whereon the dress and feelings of each period may be hung.

We will leave the great Emperor to his glory, and to the historians who have described it, and we will turn our own swift and comprehensive glance upon the dainty garments of his fair subjects, and upon the pomp and pageantry which filled Paris with splendour, from 1806 to 1809.

The Empress Joséphine had been allotted a private income of six hundred thousand francs a year, besides some hundred and thirty thousand francs more, for her privy purse and charities. This sum, we might have thought, would have been more than sufficient to cover the expense, both ordinary and extraordinary, of her Majesty's toilette. But so extravagant was Joséphine, so generous, so careless, so ruled by foolish whims and fancies, that she was in a chronic condition of debt, and perpetually obliged to appeal to the Emperor's generosity.



1805

In her private rooms at the Tuileries, confusion reigned supreme. Her apartments were incessantly besieged by a mob of poor relatives, and cousins in the most distant degree, by milliners and dressmakers, jewellers and goldsmiths, fortune-tellers, painters of portraits and miniatures, who came for sittings for the innumerable pictures on canvas and ivory which she bestowed so freely on all her friends—and even on casual tradesmen, and on her servant-maids. She could not, in her private life, endure the smallest decorum or etiquette; and her indolent nature

stretched happy arms in the midst of confused heaps of rich stuffs, tumbled carpets, and half-opened packages of varied merchandise. Her private rooms were a sort of Temple of Dress, easy of access to every foreign merchant and old hag who bartered secondhand brocades and jewels. Bonaparte had forbidden this slatternly, greedy, sordid tribe to show its face in Paris ; he had exacted his wife's formal promise never again to admit the Ghetto birds to her presence. Joséphine vowed she never would, wept a few tears—but always, within a day or two, contrived to bring the itinerant vendors back to her boudoir, and to luxuriate once more in the delights of watching dusty wrappers fall, of turning over Eastern silks and Persian embroideries, of fingering bargains in the shape of scarves and jewels, of revelling in the play of brilliant colour, in the delicate textures and all the endless surprises of her improvised bazaar. "Shawls, jewels, stuffs, gew-gaws of every kind, were perpetually brought her," says Mme. de Rémusat, "and everything she bought, never asking the price, and, for the most part, straightway forgetting what she had purchased. . . . From the very outset she gave her lady-in-waiting and her lady of the bedchamber to understand that they were to have nothing to say to her wardrobe. Everything connected with that was arranged between herself and her waiting-women, of whom she had seven or eight. Her toilette consumed a great deal of time. Certain operations directed to the maintenance of her personal beauty, and in which cosmetics played a part, she kept entirely to herself. When these were over she had her hair dressed. During this ceremony she wore a long and very elegant wrapper, trimmed with lace. Her chemises and petticoats were all embroidered and lace-trimmed. She changed her inner garment, and all her linen, three times each day, and never wore a pair of stockings twice. If the *dames du palais* came to the door while her hair was being dressed, they were allowed to enter. When her hair was arranged, great baskets were brought her, containing a selection of gowns, bonnets, and shawls. In summer, these gowns were of muslin or cambric, much embroidered and elaborately adorned. In winter there were coats of silken or woollen material, or velvet. The Empress chose her garments for the day. In the morning she always wore a hat or bonnet, trimmed with flowers or feathers, and high long-sleeved dresses. She had between three and four hundred shawls. She used

1806

VIEW OF THE TWO PANORAMAS & OF THE PASSAGE BETWEEN THEM
(1810).

AT THE RACES ON THE CHAMP DE MARS
(*1811*).

them for gowns, she spread them over her bed, and made cushions of them for her dog to lie on. She wore one all the early part of the day, and had a way of draping it on her shoulders which I have never seen in any other person. Bonaparte, who thought her shawls hid her too much, would snatch them off her, and throw them on the fire ; then she would send for another. She bought every shawl that was offered her, whatever the price. She had some that were worth eight, ten, and twelve thousand francs. But, indeed, these shawls were one of the great luxuries of this Court. The ladies scorned to appear in a shawl that had only cost fifty louis, and boasted of the price given for those they wore."

The mania for Cashmere, Persian, and Turkish shawls, and all the Eastern taste then prevalent in the fashionable world, had its root in the Egyptian Expedition, and in the Oriental stuffs then brought back by French vessels, from Cairo and elsewhere. Joséphine had already, on her return from Italy, brought in the classical fashion in dress, more especially the tiaras, bracelets and earrings set with cameos. And she, too, was to be the first to bring the Oriental embroideries, the gold-spangled turbans, and all the silken stuffs of the far Indies, into general appreciation. Lazy and indolent to the core, without the smallest literary taste, never reading a line, nor writing if she could avoid it, unsuited to any intellectual effort, her passive nature spent itself entirely in the pleasures of the toilette, and in adorning her dwellings and her gardens. She hated the theatre, and hardly ever went to one except with the Emperor. Yet, within her limited circle, she contrived to squander gold in handsful to such an extent, that Bonaparte, open-handed as he was, and ready to gratify his wife's lightest whim, chafed at her extravagance. Her whole day was spent in dressing and undressing. In the evening she gave even more care and attention to her appearance and her gowns. Her hair was generally simply dressed, in the antique style—the beautiful black locks drawn to the top of the head and interwoven with flowers, nets of pearl, or fillets studded with precious gems. As a general rule, too, she wore the white gowns so much admired by the Emperor. These were made of misty India muslin, extraordinarily fine and clear in texture, which cost at least a hundred to a hundred and fifty francs a yard. The lower part of the skirt had a scalloped embroidery in gold and pearls, and the bodice,

1806

covered with a full drapery, left the arms bare, and was clasped at the shoulders by cameos, diamond buckles, or hooks shaped like lions' heads. The Empress, like most of the leading lights of fashion under the Empire, was always careful that her dresses should harmonise with the colour of the furniture which was to be their setting and background. Thus, a pale blue gown suited yellow brocade hangings and furniture, while a myrtle-green Court dress could only appear in surroundings adorned with poppy-coloured damask. This matter was one of great anxiety to all those ladies who desired to enjoy the full triumph of their attire, and we are assured that when, the day after her marriage, the Princess Borghese (formerly Mme. Le Clerc) was received at St. Cloud, she almost died of rage when she saw herself spreading her sumptuous robes of green brocade, with their jewelled embroidery, over a divan covered with damask of the deepest blue !

Mme. de Rémusat, to whom we are fain to turn for all our knowledge of current fashions and Palace gossip at this period, is very explicit as to Joséphine's extravagance. "The smallest party, the tiniest dance, was an excuse for her to order a new dress, and this in spite of the shop-loads of things kept in the Palace—for one of her peculiarities was that she would never part with anything of the kind. It would not be possible to reckon up the sum spent by her in dress of every kind. Every tradesman in Paris was always making something for her. I have myself seen her wear several lace dresses, each worth thirty, forty, or even a hundred thousand francs. It is almost incredible that a person whose love of dress was so completely gratified should never have wearied of it. She dressed just as elaborately when she lived at the Malmaison, after her divorce, and her clothes were quite as fine, even when she expected to be alone. On the very day of her death she ordered her women to dress her in a very magnificent wrapper because she thought the Emperor of Russia might come and see her." And so the fascinating woman passed away, robed in rose-colour, and adorned with knots of ribbon !

1806

Our readers will imagine how Joséphine's passion for luxury and expense stirred up her courtiers' emulation, and how indispensable the invention, arrangement, and execution of fresh glories, and the doing it, too, so as to avoid any failure in effect, and any chance of estranging her Majesty's

goodwill, became to every lady admitted to her presence. Queen Hortense, the young wife of Louis Bonaparte, dressed very splendidly, but her magnificence was tempered with much discretion and order, and a wise economy. Very different was it with Caroline Murat and Pauline Borghese, who were furiously anxious to eclipse their sister-in-law, and whose sole vanity and delight consisted in dress and ostentatious show. They were frantic that Joséphine, a mere Beauharnais, should have the *pas* over themselves, the sisters of Bonaparte, and they snatched at anything that might emphasise their dislike of their rival, and sting her to the quick, under a mask of affection and cordiality. They never appeared at the Tuileries except in the finest of Court dresses costing at least fifteen or twenty thousand francs, and these they loaded with all the most showy jewels they possessed, disposed amongst the interstices of masses of bullion embroidery, thus, not unfrequently, rendering their aspect purely comic.

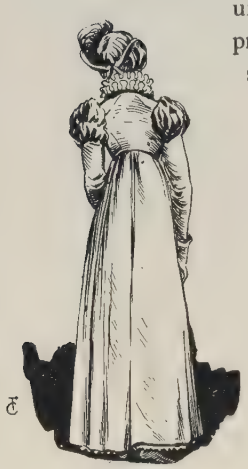
1806

Among the Court ladies, Mme. Savary, who was later to be Duchesse de Rovigo, Mme. Maret, the future Duchesse de Bassano, and Mme. de Canisy, ranked immediately after the Princesses as leaders of fashion. They were reckoned to spend more than twenty thousand crowns a year upon their clothes, which, taken at the value of money in those days, was considered an excessive sum. In the famous Quadrille, "The Peruvians going to the Temple of the Sun," danced by the Imperial suite, the value of the jewels worn by the ladies was reckoned at twenty millions of francs. People held up their hands and talked of fairyland, as though Aladdin himself had found his way to the Palace. We, at this end of the century, should scarce lift an eyebrow at the mention of such a sum locked up in precious stones.

But we must bid farewell to the Court, and wander through the city, to gaze on Fashion's freaks amidst the noise and clamour of the town, and in the public haunts of pleasure.

On January 1, 1806, the Republican Calendar, which had been in use for a little over thirteen years and three months, was finally

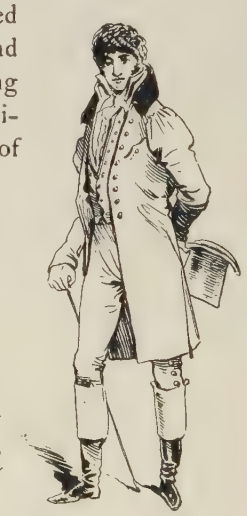
dispensed with. The year XIV was suddenly cut short, at the beginning of Nivôse, and the Gregorian Calendar was universally and unanimously readopted, for all legal documents, public and private, for all correspondence, newspapers, and printed sheets. Thus, the last trace of the Republican era vanished. France had no eyes save for the country's idol and triumphant leader. On every side the wildest enthusiasm acclaimed him. The streets rang with rejoicing shouts of "Victory, Victory! Long live the Grand Army! Long live the Emperor!" At the Opera, and in all the chief theatres, choruses were sung in honour of Napoleon the Great, and every passing soldier was treated as a hero.



1807

Esmenard, the special bard of the Empire, invoked all the Muses to shower honour on the mighty warrior, and the whole nation glowed with patriotic fire. Signs of luxury and splendour sprang up everywhere, and the new *régime* plunged into an endless succession of balls, concerts, and official entertainments. Senators, members of the legislative body, and marshals of the Empire, vied with one another in the splendour of the entertainments offered to their sovereign. Brilliant military uniforms elbowed jewel-covered robes, amidst fairylike bowers, dazzling with wax lights and wreathed with exquisite blossoms. Never was anything more like the Arabian Nights, never, perhaps, were feminine youth and beauty adorned with a greater wealth of ornament, and profusion of elegant detail.

Fashion still leant to partial nudity—at all events to garments of semi-transparent texture. In spite of the cold, these bold-hearted French ladies went a-walking with bare arms and uncovered bosoms, and dainty silk-stockinged feet, shod with open shoes.



1807

The men braved Death for the sake of glory; the women-folk faced the grim king for pleasure and for vanity. The chilliest members of the fair sex went shopping, and walked up and down the boulevards, wearing a light fur-trimmed coat with a swans-down collar, and a veil wound round a close bonnet; sometimes a fur tippet was added over the shawl, or the shawl was worn beneath the coat.

Witzchouras had not yet come into vogue, and muffs were no

longer like great barrels, a yard long, as during the Directory period. Indoor gowns were cut fuller than previously, but the waists were inordinately short, and lifted the bosom higher than Nature had intended. It took many yards of muslin to make a gown. Every woman in evening dress wore wide epaulettes, and a semicircular *décolletage*, which heightened the beauty of her shoulders and neck. Very little paint or powder was used, the taste of that day preferring cheeks of a natural pallor, and hair in an admired disorder. The style of hairdressing known as the "Titus" had come in again, with more curling locks, this time, on the forehead and temples. Coronets and fillets were generally worn. Skirts which showed every outline of the body were frequently and profusely trimmed with flowers. Wreaths of small white roses, heliotrope, jessamine, carnations, oleanders, white and pink, and even blue roses, were all much worn, especially towards the close of the Empire, when troubadour fashions came in, and crenelated hat brims, mameluke sleeves, and hair dressed *à l'enfant*, struck a feudal and gothic note, well in accord with the dreary, contorted, sentimental, and eminently silly literature poured forth by such novelists as Ducray-Duminil, Mrs. Radcliffe, and Mme. de Chastenay.

1809

Such quantities of gems were worn, between 1806 and 1809, that the ladies looked like walking jewellers' shops. The fingers were hidden with rings, gold chains were twisted as many as seven or eight times round the neck. Heavy and massive earrings weighed down the lobes of the ears; bracelets of every description, in carved and enamelled gold, encircled the arms; pearl necklaces, fringed, or with twisted strands, were worn in the hair, forming a roll or coronet in front, and sometimes hanging loose upon the shoulders. Long gold pins held the hair in place on the top of the head. The very fine ladies wore coronets, composed on one side of a diamond and gold laurel branch, and on the other of an olive branch in pearls and gold. Combs took the shape of a weeping-willow in gold, set with diamonds and pearls, and there were necklaces innumerable, the favourite pattern being that known as the *vainqueur*, the strangest medley of hearts carved out of cornelian, sandal-wood, sardonyx, malachite, lapis lazuli, and so forth, all hung on a golden chain. The most fashionable perfume-box was called the *bouton de rose*. The lid was enamelled on gold,

and the flower, daintily outlined with fine pearls, was a faithfully painted reproduction of a wild rose blossom.

The mania for jewels reached such a pitch that a reaction set in at last, and by degrees they were utterly proscribed. Ladies began by wearing diamonds in invisible settings, and threading their pearls, and their amber, amethyst, cornelian, and agate beads, on silken cords. Then, little by little, all the jewels disappeared into their caskets, and by about 1810 the correct thing, among the smartest section of society, was to exhibit the most absolute sobriety and unobtrusiveness in the matter of gew-gaws.

1807

A device which found general favour with the stronger sex was that of the "Rising Sun." Sword hilts, buckles, coat buttons, watch cases, the embroideries on clothing, were all adorned with "rising suns." We seek in vain for an explanation of this Japanese fancy. Was the sun taken as an emblem, or was the fashion a mere whimsical caprice? Echo vouchsafes us no reply.

A fine lady of the Empire period spent her whole day in occupations connected with the adornment of her beauty. She left her bed to plunge forthwith into a Chinese bath, scented with almond paste, and had her dainty person rubbed, and perfumed, and delicately cared for. Her hands and feet were daily submitted to the skill of the *manicure* and *pedicure*, and this duty over, she donned an embroidered muslin hooded scarf with apron attached, and breakfasted. Then came her tradesmen, her workwomen and milliners, and that indispensable functionary known as Mons. Courbette, who taught the art of bowing and making introductions, and excelled in demonstrating the beauties of the art of character-dancing. With him she would spend an hour or more, learning to use her arms with grace, to wave her hand with correct gesture to a passing friend, to make her curtseys, to lean first on her left hip and then on her right—the lesson winding up with a brilliant exposition of the value of the art of dancing.

1808

SKATERS ON THE RESERVOIR AT LA VILLETTE
(*1813*).

COSSACK ENCAMPMENT ON THE CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES
(1814).

Close on the dancing-master came the secretary, who wrote a few short notes, and was speedily dismissed, for the hour for the daily expedition to Bagatelle and the Bois de Boulogne was close at hand. The eager nymph then either donned her riding habit and mounted a magnificent steed, or she ordered her carriage—a calash with a parasol hood, or a tortoiseshell-coloured cabriolet—and departed to air her charms at some outdoor entertainment.

This over, she returned to try the effect of some Greek-fashioned dress, cut on a new pattern, and then proceeded to give audience to her hairdresser, in her boudoir decorated after the antique style.

C

1809

He had already waited on her in the morning, to arrange her coiffure *à la Titus*, only a few locks of which had been allowed to peep forth beneath her little cap. But this second visit was the really important one, and the *artiste en coiffure* would stand, with dreamy eyes, waiting for inspiration—one hand holding a sketch of Mlle. Mars, or the Duchesnois, the other grasping a strip of muslin, so soft and brilliantly tinted as to recall an Eastern shawl. Turn about, he would glance at the sketch, and the indolent fair one seated before him; suddenly his skilful fingers entwined the muslin in her locks, leaving the two ends, red or yellow, and of unequal length, to fall on her left shoulder. Then, with a backward step, and blinking at the glass, he begged to know whether his performance *à la Benjamin*, or *à la Siméon* found favour in his lovely client's eyes, vowing that, for his part, he held it singularly becoming to her fascinating style of beauty.

When evening closed in, our Empire belle, robed in a garment trimmed with silk plush, or a white crape tunic touched with satin, took a box at the Bouffons, or went to hear Elleviou, the reigning favourite of the Parisian public, or, if she preferred it, clapped her hands to applaud Brunet in "Ma Tante Urlurette." Supper awaited her, on her return from the play, her friends lingered round the card-tables, and night had long passed into morning before the fair devotee of pleasure submitted herself once more to her waiting-woman's hands, and stretched herself, in utter weariness of body, between her sheets of finest linen—her head half concealed by the laces of a dainty nightcap, and her hands encased in well greased-gloves.

Between the years 1805 and 1814, Paris fashions were never the same for more than a week. So delicate were the shades of change, that it is well-nigh impossible to note them now. The very editors of the special fashion journals, then published every five days, declared themselves prevented, by the immense multiplicity of styles, from fully satisfying their readers' curiosity.

1810

If, however, we take our stand about the middle of 1808, we shall realise by a retrospective glance, that carefully curled hair, or a simple and unadorned coiffure *à la Ninon*, which at one time had been considered unfit for full-dress occasions, were now the *nec plus ultra* of smartness. Feathers, again, which had been the badge of splendour, of the fullest dress, and the most important occasions, were hardly ever seen, except on the very quietest. Fashion forbade their use, except falling carelessly, or floating lightly, over a morning bonnet. They were not reckoned sufficiently severe or stately for official appearances, or great ceremonials. The sleeves of gowns had grown full, giving an impression of that plumpness which adds beauty to the outline of the arm. One whim of that fanciful goddess who had decreed, a few short years before, that no unequal fold was to be seen, now caused every fine lady's sleeve to be as full of plaits as any fop's lace frill. "In this year 1808," remarks one writer, "there is no saying 'How well I am dressed,' or 'How well Mrs. So-and-So's gown fits her,' but we must sigh, 'How beautifully I am draped!' 'How well Madame So-and-So shows off her lines!'"

People had begun to declare that the fairer a woman was, the less she stood in need of ornament, that a pretty woman's dress should be elegant but simple, and that the perfect art of dress was to keep to sober trimmings, and to display taste, and knowledge of graceful effect, without straining after oddity and novelty, nor depending on richness of material, and a ruinous and useless expenditure for jewels. The members of the gay world assured each other that vanity and bad taste almost invariably travel hand in hand. The new scarves were made to hide the bosom and show off the shoulders. Pocket-handkerchiefs were no longer knotted together, to serve as purses. Each lady kept her money in a bag of golden network, which she fastened to her belt. The gold- and silver-spangled gowns which had been the rage in the earlier years of the

Imperial reign were no longer considered in good taste. But silver-striped shawls and veils were greatly admired, both for ballroom wear, and for visiting the theatres. Ladies danced the *Bolero* and the *Chica*, and, though they were all completely devoted to amusement, they put on a weary and melancholy air, and vowed all external pleasure was tiresome, insipid, and utterly worn out. On fine days, the whole of Paris was out of doors. Comfortable citizens went to breathe the air on the Boulevards of the Marais, authors loitered round the bookstalls on the quays, mothers walked with their little ones on the Boulevard Montmartre, or opposite the Panorama ; fine ladies, who must e'en display their carriages and their new clothes, drove to the Bois de Boulogne ; others, of more modest pretensions, content to let their beauty earn its natural meed of admiration, betook themselves to the Terrasse des Feuillants and the Champs Elysées, where, consoled by the glances shot at them by passers-by, equestrian and pedestrian, they could indulge in scornful criticism of their richer sisters hurrying to the Bois. Gentlemen crowded to Coblentz, to gaze at the fair ladies sitting on each side of the boulevards. From Tivoli to the Colisée, and thence on to the Jardin Turc, the pavements were alive with smartly dressed citizens' wives, and *grisettes* from every quarter of the city. The Champs Elysées swarmed with officers and gay young men on horseback, and broad-shouldered gallants in many-caped coats, all vying with each other in the swiftness of their movements and the boldness of their demeanour ; while the magnates of finance took their ease in their closed *berlines*, and many a fair face smiled out of open *calèche* or *demi-fortune*.*

1810

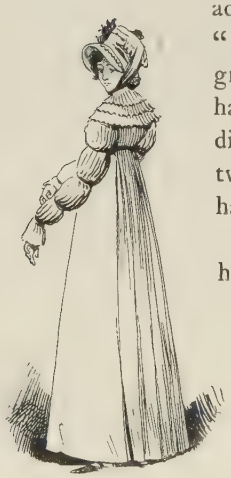
In the year 1807, the chosen hour for the Bois de Boulogne was from twelve to three o'clock. For a short time previously the fashionable world had gone to eat ices at the Café de Foy. But at the period now referred to, the correct procedure was to have the ices brought to one's own house. They were eaten summer and winter, at breakfast, at dinner, at supper, and at any intervening hour.

Every one felt obliged to go and see Olivier, and Ravel the incomparable. They were the two great trick performers of the moment. Then there was Talma to be applauded at the Français, and Madame Henry at the Opéra Comique. The vaudeville found no admirers, but all the world

* A single-horsed carriage.

crowded to the Opera rehearsals, and strove to put in an appearance in some box at the Friday performances. Fashionable folk spent hours, which they dubbed "divine," at the Académie des Arts, and then, by way of unbending into frivolity, paid *incognito* visits to Brunet's.

At evening gatherings, people of all ages congregated, the men far outnumbering the lady guests. The greater the crowd, the more successful the entertainment was considered. Foreigners were heartily welcomed and treated with honour ; the guests moved about the rooms. The conversation, unless some witty saying or joke was passed round, and, for a moment, raised a universal laugh, was anything but general. The very acme of politeness to the fair sex consisted in neglecting every other woman in the room, and crowding about the most beautiful of all, staring her out of countenance, pressing close to her, discoursing on her physical charms, pushing against her, and almost squeezing the breath out of her. When the time comes for dancing the gavotte, the guests applaud and cry "Bravo!" The chosen cavalier hurries to the front, and takes his hostess's hand in his. A piano is brought forward, the company forms a circle, some standing on chairs, and the *entrechats* are greeted with enthusiasm. The fair performer, exhausted by her efforts, but smiling and happy beyond words, retires, to rest a moment on her Grecian couch, while her partner receives the congratulations of the majority of the young men present, who are open-mouthed in admiration. There are whispers, and open comments. "How splendidly you danced! Such lightness and such grace!" And the gentleman, fanning himself with his handkerchief the while, replies with all the condescending dignity of the *muscadin* of bygone days, "Just once or twice, indeed, I was inspired. But it was not all I could have wished—*je n'ai fait que chiffonner la gavotte!*"



1811

Many a delightful picture might be drawn of men and habits in Paris, under the Empire. The writers of the latter end of our century have not given enough attention to this attractive field. Innumerable personages, scores of types, drawn from *salon*, from street, from theatre and wine-shop, Court ladies, *grisettes*, and all the intermediate classes of the fair sex, and every masculine character, from the grumbling old soldier to the ultra-patriot civilian, stand ready to the author's hand. Posterity is eager to trace the great Napoleon's steps across his European battlefields, historians have followed closely in the wake of

his victorious eagles, but the domestic life of France, during those years of glory, the mind, the manners, the fashions of the country, during the period lying between the Consulate and the Restoration, have not been sufficiently examined. This would appear to be the proper moment for entering on such an undertaking.

1813

Towards 1807, a sorely fleeced husband, on whose mind the necessity for economy had been forced, published what purported to be a statement of the "Annual expenditure of a Fine Lady in Paris," culled from his household account-book. This we reproduce *in toto*. The document has its serious and its comic side :—

	FRANCS
To Three hundred and sixty-five caps, bonnets, or hats	10,000
Two cashmere shawls	1,200
Six hundred gowns	25,000
Three hundred and sixty-five pairs of shoes	600
Two hundred pairs of white stockings, and as many coloured	3,000
Twelve chemises	300
Rouge and powder	300
Two veils	4,800
Elastic stays, wigs, reticules, parasols, fans, &c.	6,000
Essences, perfumes, and various drugs for preserving an appearance of youth and beauty	1,200
Jewels and other trifles	10,000
Furniture—Greek, Roman, Etruscan, Turkish, Arab, Chinese, Persian, Egyptian, English, and Gothic	50,000
Six saddle-horses and two led horses	10,000
Carriages—English, French, Spanish, &c.	25,000
Dancing Master	5,000
French Master	300
One bed	20,000
Newspaper articles, boxes at theatres, concerts, &c.	30,000
Charity	100
Total	202,800

If, to this amount, we add household expenses, servants' wages and housekeeping, present-giving, lottery tickets, and losses at cards, we

shall soon reach a total of over a hundred thousand crowns, one which, even nowadays, would be more than a fair sum for any fashionable lady to disburse. Shawls still played the most important part in every woman's scheme of adornment. Though less difficult to obtain than under the Directory, they were still expensive, and eagerly sought after. A real cashmere shawl was originally an extraordinary rarity, and an object of universal envy. By degrees they became more general, and ended by being brought into use in every imaginable way—for turbans, coats, gowns, and even as furniture coverings. Eastern shawls hanging carelessly over the edge of the boxes, brought a touch of colour, and a most pleasing effect of drapery, into every theatre. The ladies took every possible advantage of them, in the performance of classic dances, in their walks abroad, and visits to the playhouses. They wound them skilfully about their heads, they draped them over their fair bosoms, holding them close with daintily-gloved hands. The cashmere shawl, in fact, played a conspicuous part in the richest and most refined society in Paris.

1813

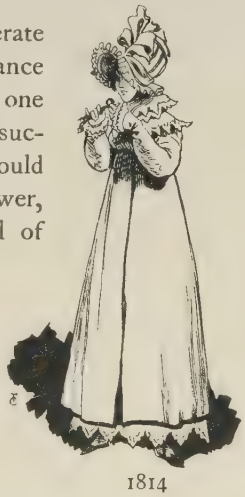
Lady Morgan has asserted, in one of her published works—that on France—that the French women of her day were apt to go astray, and lose all their most interesting characteristics, and everything most worthy of respect in their general conduct, when their taste for dress and fashion came into play. Economy was cast to the winds, and unlimited extravagance ruled the day. Disquisitions on the merits of the *divine* cashmere, and of the exquisitely embroidered pocket-handkerchiefs, replaced all discussions on financial or political affairs. "How many shawls do you possess, my dear?" was a question of far more importance to the fair pupils of such men as M. de Chateaubriand and M. de Fiévée, and was far more gravely considered by them, than any new treatise on politics, sent forth by their sage instructors.

"This elegant product of Indian industry is indispensable to every French woman; and so high a value does she set upon it, that one would almost believe its tissue invested with some magic spell. I shall never forget," continues Lady Morgan, "the air of astonishment and compassion with which one of my French lady friends received my avowal that I had never owned but one cashmere shawl in my life. 'Why, great Heaven,' she cried, 'it isn't respectable! My dearest, you must buy yourself another out of the proceeds of your

next book. A cashmere shawl is as good as a landed property, surely!'"

Lady Morgan omits to state, and she would, perhaps, hardly have realised, that a cashmere shawl was looked on, in France, as a valuable inheritance to be transmitted to posterity. The remark, "It is a piece of furniture," was often heard. As a matter of fact, our great-grandmothers' shawls have been passed on from one generation to the next, and even nowadays their astonishingly delicate texture and wonderful colouring delight the curious eyes of those who care to turn over the contents of the carved wardrobes, still standing in many an ancient country house.

Shawls were driven from the field at last, and were replaced, during the closing years of the Empire, by the caped driving-coat and the hooded *witzchoura*. This last, a most ungraceful garment, which concealed the wearer's waist, was not becoming either to very short, or to stout, figures. The furriers put it forward, and charged enormous sums for making it. Furs—ermine especially—were immensely worn between 1810 and 1814. There were ermine-trimmed wadded coats, ermine witzchouras, spencers, great-coats and muffs. The ladies wrapped up just as much as they had stripped at an earlier period. Their dress was really pretty, full of elegance and good taste, as La Mésangère's engravings prove.



1814

These Empire fashions are worthy our more deliberate attention. We should do well to bestow a separate glance on each of the many charming styles which followed one another for ten years, in such close and pleasingly varied succession. More than a thousand distinct costumes would claim our admiration, and challenge our descriptive power, and even yet we should not have exhausted the roll of Fashion's charming fancies. We ought to consider the influence of Marie-Louise on feminine attire, subsequent to the Emperor's second marriage, and notice the manner in which Napoleon contrived to maintain the supremacy of French taste in dress.

But all these studies and researches, frivolous as they may seem, would carry us too far. A whole volume would scarcely suffice to contain the minute descriptions, enlivened with scores of explanatory coloured plates, which such a proceeding would involve. Will not some feminine writer turn her agile pen to this airy and fascinating subject, and give us details of

its ever-changing beauties? There is no doubt that literary style may have its sex—that grace and flexibility are the special gifts of woman—and it is some gifted woman who should set herself the task of limning the fleeting charms of Fashion, a matter so inseparably bound up with the great art of Pleasing. The present writer will find comfort in the belief that this work of his, however incomplete, is the fullest which has as yet appeared. In the year 1680, thus wrote the wise La Bruyère: "One fashion has hardly extinguished another, before it is wiped out by one newer still, which itself gives place to a successor, and that not destined to be the last. So fickle are we!"

The fashions of the First Empire were, as will have already appeared, far the most graceful of the century; never again shall we behold any more varied, more ingenious, and less commonplace. The innumerable costumes of the period, represented in the masterpieces of Boilly, are a never-ending delight to the artistic eye. Gazing at them, we seem to hear the silken rustle of the dainty, clinging, softly furred garments, and to feel, even yet, the exquisite charm and overmastering fascination wielded by the fearless beauties, whose fair forms peopled that glorious and heroic age.

CROSSING THE PONT DES ARTS

(*1816*).

THE SAINT-CLOUD COACH MEETING

(1817).

CHAPTER IV

DRESS, DRAWING-ROOMS, AND SOCIETY UNDER THE RESTORATION

1815–1825

LIKE the veriest courtier, Fashion has ever been the first to salute the rising sun.

The return of the Bourbons to their ancestral throne was greeted by a general return, on the part of the fair sex, to white attire, and especially to snowy billows of the clearest muslin. *Fleurs de lis*, white scarves and cockades, Henri IV. hats with snow-white plumes, dresses and coats of cambric, ribbons of undyed silk, bonnets of white puffed crape, and garlands of lilies for the hair, were all distinctive attributes of feminine costume, towards the middle of the year 1814. No jewels were to be seen, save rings of an emblematic pattern, which earned them swift popularity—a golden cable, bearing three *fleurs de lis*, also in gold, and with the following motto in white enamelled letters, *Dieu nous les rend!* The presence of the allied troops brought English, Russian and Polish adornments into vogue, and not a patriotic voice was raised in protest. Innumerable

bonnets *à l'Anglaise* were produced. Heavy and clumsy head-pieces they were, crimped and goffered and plaited—as ugly as they well could be. Then there were Russian caps, wide in the head and tiny in the peak; there were helmets covered with various stuffs, and adorned with tufts of white cocks' feathers, like those worn by some officers of the allied armies; there were a few white cashmere turbans; and trimmings of white lilac blossoms everywhere.

1815

For a time—a few months only—short dresses, scarves worn like a Highlander's plaid, and Scotch bonnets, had their day. The white standard that floated over the Tuileries seemed to dictate the tone of the national costume.

In every corner of Paris were to be seen pale pink dresses, of the silk material called "levantine," and white merino tunics; some of these, cut like a pelisse, had no waistband, and their loose corners fluttered in the breeze. Certain gowns, called *à la vierge*, were made with a high tucker reaching to the chin. An enormous number of white gowns, striped gowns, gowns with tiny blue or pink checks, were worn. The flounces on all these were white, but the scalloped trimming must be worked to match the colour of the pattern, and there must be row on row of it. The finest cashmere shawls, with their splendid bright-hued patterns, were by no means ousted, as yet, by the pelisses, or coats with triple capes. It was generally agreed that nothing showed off a fair lady's shoulders, and fell in such soft and exquisite folds about her figure, as a really valuable shawl. The favourite shawl merchants were Terneaux and Courtois, whose establishments were crowded, the moment they announced the arrival of a fresh consignment from India.

The wives of modest citizens, who could not afford the luxury of a real cashmere, were eager purchasers of floss silk shawls, dyed with the gayest patterns of palms, with wide and handsome borders. Striped scarves in knitted silk, hitherto known as *écharpes circassiennes*, were now called *écharpes d'Iris*, and were worn with much negligent grace by the ladies who acquired them.

"The desire for splendid attire was everywhere manifest," writes M. Augustin Challamel in his exhaustive "History of Fashion." "Louis XVIII. and the Comte d'Artois were surrounded by ardent royalists, who crowded the apartments of the Tuileries. The inhabitants of

every hotel in the Faubourg St. Germain dreamt of evening parties, balls, and concerts. Trade felt a sudden impetus, and this was put forward as an excuse, by all who longed for gay doings. Paris soon boasted four well-known ladies' tailors, thirteen milliners' establishments, all of them besieged by customers, seven first-class florists' shops, three staymakers of the highest class, and eight good shoemakers, whose whole business was confined to the fair sex. White dresses trimmed with flowers all round the bottom of the skirt were usually worn, both at private dancing-parties and public balls. Flowers, generally roses, adorned the hair. There were gowns in the Scotch style, others called *à l'indolente*, and others with chinchilla trimmings. The accessories varied considerably. Some sleeves were full, and adorned with several rows of ruching; others were funnel-shaped, with a certain fulness on the shoulders, which gradually diminished to the wrist, where a ribbon bound them closely over coloured kid gloves.

"Ladies who wore low gowns displayed a necklace, either of pearls or garnets. Those who affected short sleeves adopted long gloves, which gave an added charm to their appearance. Embroidered tunics were brightened with pearl trimmings, and adorned with wreaths of marabout feathers. The long gloves were exceedingly expensive, but no fashionable lady could do less than have a new pair every day, for the freshness of their appearance was a *sine quâ non*. Many of these gloves were chamois coloured."

1815

The hair was dressed in tiny curls pressed closely down on the forehead and temples, and arranged in very unobtrusive loops over the nape of the neck. Artificial flowers were almost invariably worn, but always, it should be added, in very small quantities. The chief attention of the leaders of fashion during the Restoration period seems to have been applied to the arrangement of the hair, and to an incessant variety of head-coverings. A good ten thousand different shapes for hats, bonnets, and caps, appeared between 1815 and 1830. The fashion journals of the day, indeed, ceased all reference to gowns and cloaks, and spent all their eloquence on hairdressing, Leghorn straws, silk-plush bonnets, plumed velvet helmets, hats made of *gros de Naples*, and crape puffings, lawn caps,

and Polish caps, Austrian military caps, muslin turbans, and turbans *moabites*, felt bonnets *à la Ourika*, morning caps of white muslin, and morning caps of black velvet, edged with tulle. The wealth of choice must surely have made the fair one's head swim before her coiffeur laid a finger on it!

1815

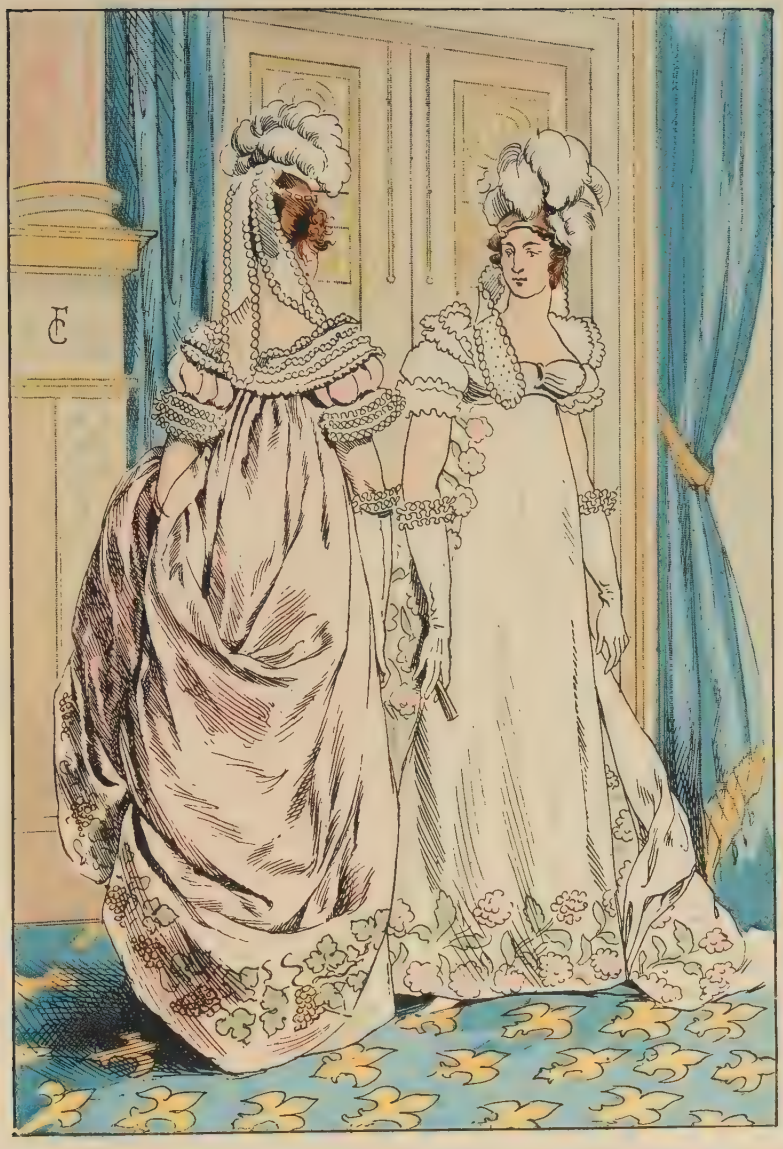
And what bonnets too! Some like a French judge's cap, only far higher, to which was tacked a pent-house like the quaint roof of a fourteenth-century dwelling. Others on the model of the extraordinary infantry shakos of the *Grande Armée*, with hoods of quite unmeasured size and depth attached. Others, again, like huge Gargantuan pie-dishes! All of them overladen with ribbons, flowers, cockades, twists, padded borders, knots of satin, ruches, aigrettes, and nodding plumes. It is hard to believe these whimsical inventions, these warlike head-pieces, these bassinets, and wondrous helmets, and astounding morions, should ever have sheltered the dainty head and laughing face of any ancestress of ours!

Gowns grew gradually longer-waisted. By 1822 the waist was once more seen in its natural place, and the chest and bosom were left free. Common sense began to work reform both in the dressmaker's and in the tailor's art. Loose gowns of India muslin, trimmed with five rows of embroidery, representing Judas-flowers, and four bias folds, were much worn, as were others in a material known as *crêpe Elodie*, pink, blue, or delicate green, trimmed with puffings of the same.

Having exhausted every variety of insertion, slashing, flounce, plaiting, and twist, the dressmakers returned to a simpler style of trimming, and skirt-hems were adorned with plain silk, or coloured braids.

The *canezou*, so dear to all Paul de Kock's fair heroines, replaced the spencer. This pretty garment was eminently becoming to young girls, showing off the figure, and accentuating all its slimness and grace.

Stays came back into favour, and their manufacture, hitherto most primitive in its processes, developed into an art, and one which possessed few masters. A good pair of stays, made by Lacroix, could not be had for less than five louis, and even at that rate it was impossible to supply the demand. These stays were in two separate parts. A small white satin cushion, like the "dress-improver" of later days was fastened to the back, to give an effect of slenderness to the



COURT DRESSES

In the early Restoration

THE LESSER THÉATRES

(*1819*).

waist, and support the skirt. Certain stays were provided with an ingenious system of elastics, which laced and unlaced of themselves. A steel busk was generally used to fasten the stays in front, in spite of the outcry raised by the medical profession, which declared them dangerous.

The becoming epaulettes falling over the upper sleeves soon disappeared, and were followed in rapid succession by full sleeves, leg-of-mutton sleeves, and the styles known as *à béret*, *à la folle*, and *à l'éléphant*, all more or less reminiscent of the Renaissance period, and by very wide shoulders and wasp-like waists.

In winter time, huge muffs of fox fur and chinchilla were to be seen, with long fur or curly feather boas, twisted round the upper part of the body, knotted at the neck, or with loosely-falling ends—like wily serpents, each embracing some fair Eve. Swansdown mittens and tippets were also in high favour for outdoor use.

The Duchesse de Berri made a fruitless attempt to wield the sceptre of Fashion, but she never had the slightest real influence on French dress under the Restoration. This is hardly, perhaps, to be wondered at, for she bore no physical resemblance to the classic type.

Many materials, and colours, and fashionable, trinkets were named after characters in literature, and especially in favourite novels, and also after the personages in successful plays, after current events, and even after the various strange creatures from foreign climes, which were being gradually collected in the Jardin du Roi. The Vicomte d'Arlincourt's sentimental novels earned him the proud position of godfather to the turban *à l'Ipsiboé;* Mme. de Duras' touching story of "Ourika" made her the unconscious sponsor for gowns, caps, shawls, and milliners' trifles innumerable. There were *fichus à la Dame Blanche*, and *Trocadéro* ribbons in memory of the Duc d'Angoulême's sojourn *tra los montes*. There were hats *à l'Emma*, and Marie Stuart caps. Heads were dressed *à la Sultane*, *à l'Edith*, *à la Sévigné*; there were stuffs called *Elodie*, collars called *Atala*, not to mention the extraordinary and fanciful names bestowed on certain shades of colour about the year 1825. Not only do we hear of *eau du Nil*, *roseau solitaire*, *graine de réséda*, *bronze*, *fumée de Navarin*, *peau de serpent*, *brique cuite*, *jaune*

1816

vapeur or *lave de Vésuve*, but we are astounded by such titles as *souris effrayée*, *crapaud amoureux*, *puce réveuse*, and—can our ears believe it?—*araignée méditant un crime!*

In 1827 a splendid giraffe, presented to Charles X. by the Pasha of Egypt, stirred the admiration of the whole of Paris, and within a very few days every fashion—bonnets, trimmings, belts and hairdressing for both sexes—was named after the newcomer. This recalls memories of the fashions *au dernier soupir de Jocko*, which followed closely on the death of a chimpanzee much beloved of Parisian sightseers, and of the celebrated elephant Jumbo, on whom, but a few years ago, eccentric English women showered gifts of every kind—fruit, sugarplums, cakes, and even bouquets! Human nature is much the same all the world over.

The style of hairdressing underwent several changes during the Restoration period. In 1828 the hair was worn in plaits, arranged in loops of most formal effect. M. Hippolyte, the fashionable hairdresser of the day, who claimed the proud title of Wigmaker to the Court, delighted in producing curls as ultra-improbable and over-elaborated as Joseph Prud'homme's famous signature. These intricate arrangements were interwoven with flowers and pearls and strings of gems. They only needed the sugar Cupid at the top, to complete their resemblance to a confectioner's ambitious effort. The Cupid's absence was supplied by a fine variety of curling feathers.

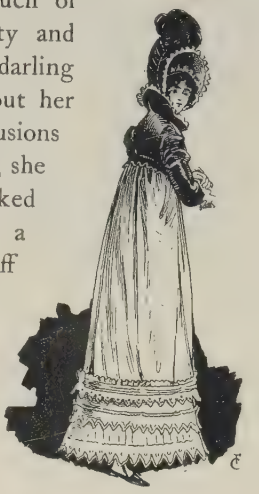
1816

But we must e'en break off our descriptions of costume under the Restoration.

Fashion is the true daughter of Proteus. It is well-nigh impossible to catch her likeness and portray her features. Our engravings, we trust, may prove more eloquent than our pen!

The country had accepted the return of the Bourbons as a guarantee of peace, and of a return to ordinary business. The new government fulfilled all momentary needs. An array of business men, and orators, and authors was to take the place of the great generals of the Empire. Napoleon had aspired to make a great nation.

The royalists, calmer and less ambitious, dreamt only of founding a great and legitimate monarchy. The king was welcomed, not as a saviour, but as a guardian, without the slightest touch of idolising affection, but with real feeling for propriety and good taste. Napoleon had been the favoured lover, the darling hero, the god of France. For him she had poured out her blood, her treasure, her very heart. When all her illusions fled away, and Louis XVIII. appeared upon the scene, she accepted him as a wise protector, who, although he lacked youth and valour and external attraction, brought her a general assurance of future peace, and a comforting whiff of his great ancestor's *poule au pot*.



1817

For a while, therefore, after the Hundred Days, the new government led a comparatively honeymoon existence. The general populace fell into transports of apparent delight over the strains of *Vive Henri Quatre* and *Charmante Gabrielle*, but deep down in the hearts of rulers and ruled alike, lay a feeling of mutual suspicion. The nation, freed from the incessant fatigues of conquest, was able to collect its thoughts, and letters and arts soon flourished anew. French intellect was restored to its former proud position, and the exquisite national politeness, which the Revolution had somewhat tarnished, revived in all its splendour.

1817

The licentious habits of the Directory, which had been transformed into a decency enforced by the strong hand, were now followed by a sort of prudishness affecting both dress and thought. Each individual took his or her own separate and dignified stand. Every one sought to exemplify correct and absolute good taste, the very acme of distinction, by the discreetest and most quiet means. All show and sham ceremonial were tabooed. The sumptuous splendour of the Empire fled before a conscious and deliberate simplicity.

In this, as in all other cases, the ladies were the chief movers. A new era may be said to have opened in the drawing-rooms of the Restoration period. Women would accept no homage but that which was most respectful and most attentive. The bold and often odiously despotic manners of the military epoch disappeared, to be replaced by the beneficent influence of men

gifted in literature or art, whose discreet behaviour and brilliant conversation earned them an eager and respectful welcome.

1818

"Women of wit, of a certain amount of beauty, with a certain aristocratic distinction, elegant after a new fashion, and simple with a simplicity not altogether genuine, crowded every drawing-room," so writes Dr. Véron. "Lamartine was the reigning star; the political woman, the poetic and literary woman, sat supreme. No one not intimately acquainted with the various classes of society, and shades of opinion, at that period, could possibly do justice to all the distinguished women belonging to it, each of whom ruled her own respectful and admiring circle, while each vied with her neighbours in intellectual brilliancy.

"Besides Mme. de Montcalm, Mme. de Duras, and one or two more, whose famous *salons* M. Villemain has described with so much regretful tenderness, a whole crop of younger entertainers had sprung up. The poetic countenances, graceful air of melancholy, and truly Christian philosophy of these ladies were the living exposition of the chief characteristics of the Restoration.

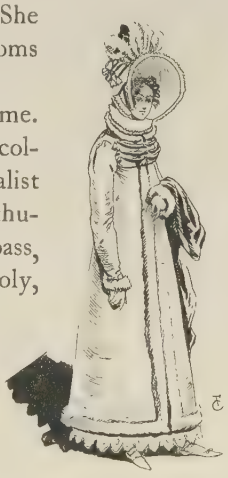
"Those who never beheld the Duchesse de Berry glide into a ball-room, her fair hair reflecting lights of brilliant gold—her dainty feet scarce touching the boards they skimmed so lightly and so swiftly, her innate grace far more apparent than her actual beauty—nor witnessed the appearance of the young Duchesse de Castries on some festive scene, can form no conception of these new beauties, aerial and fascinating, who won all suffrages and claimed all homage in the drawing-rooms of the Restoration period. Society, touched and softened by the mystic charms of Elvire in the 'Méditations,' had grown less earth-bound, less pagan in its tastes, than in the Empire days.

"Yet beauty of a more stately order still had its worthy representative, endued with the special charm of birth and breeding, in the person of the Duchesse de Guiche, who later became Duchesse de Grammont . . . Prominent politicians were much petted, and we may almost say sheltered, under the wing of such hostesses as Mme. de Sainte-Aulaire, and the young Duchesse de Broglie. Both these distinguished ladies were remarkable for their wit and intellect, and high standard of religious and other feeling—a most attractive compound, which they successfully reconciled with their worldly duties and political leanings."

Ladies of fashion who desired to attain real eminence and importance, were regular attendants at the sittings of the Chamber. Each had her pet orator, and every minister was credited with possessing some Egeria in the Faubourg St. Germain.

Mons. de Martignac's speeches (thanks to his eloquence and wit, and exquisite speaking voice) drew crowds as numerous as those that hang on the notes of any favourite tenor. That charming woman, the Princesse de Bagration, drove a whole team of gushing female friends through the mazy labyrinth of her political combinations.

This new society was specially remarkable for the freedom of its intellectual movement. Literary and artistic questions took precedence of all others, and were as eagerly discussed in ladies' drawing-rooms as in the most learned society. Mme. de Duras, who had returned to France for the education of her daughters Félicie and Clara, welcomed all the young poets and novelists of the new generation with a never-failing cordiality which set one and all at ease, and a gentle and dignified courtesy, the special characteristic of this noble-hearted woman. It was the author of "Édouard" and of "Ourika" who first took Chateaubriand under her protection, and, by her influence with M. de Blacas, obtained his appointment as Ambassador to Sweden. Mme. Récamier, too, had returned from Italy, and installed herself in Paris, at the beginning of Louis XVIII.'s reign. She soon opened, or partly opened, the doors of her new rooms in the Rue du Mont-Blanc.



1818

Among the most eagerly sought hostesses was Mme. Ripert, whose husband edited the *Quotidienne*, in collaboration with Michaud. The most extreme royalist party gathered in this house, presided over by an enthusiastic, capricious, fickle-tempered woman, who would pass, in the shortest time imaginable, from mirth to melancholy, from calm to fury, from audacity to terror, and who, in spite of her deep affection for the Bourbon family, had, out of sheer contradiction, declared her adherence to the constitutional party.

M. Fiévée was the chief star of her social constellation, and his sayings were conscientiously quoted and passed round. Other regular attendants were M. Pigeon and M. Missonnier, both valued members of the staff of the *Quotidienne*, the aged General Anselme, the Comte du Boutet, a most

pleasing-mannered soldier, and M. de Valmalette, the La Fontaine of the Restoration.

Among other hospitable houses, famed for pleasant and witty conversation, where the guests, many of them devoted lovers of the beautiful, were often roused to enthusiasm by the noble sayings of intellectual men, we should mention those of the Comtesse Baraguay d'Hilliers, the Comte de Chabrol, Prefect of Paris, the Comtesse de Lacretelle ; of Mme. Auger, wife of the permanent secretary of the Académie Française, of M. Campenon, and most especially that of Mme. Virginie Ancelot, whose drawing-room played, to many persons, the part of a friendly ante-chamber, giving eventual access to the Académie itself.

1819

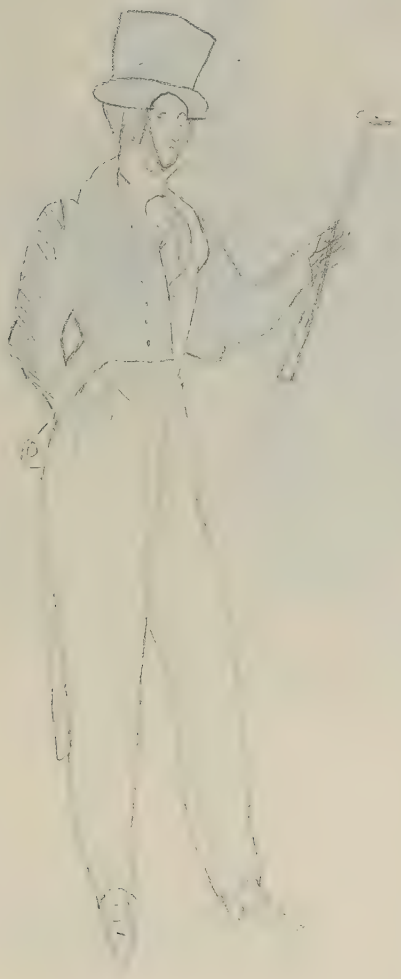
Most of the remarkable people in Paris were to be found gathered round this kind-hearted hostess, who, some years subsequently, published a most interesting little work, recalling details of a social and intellectual intercourse then utterly closed. Among her most faithful visitors were Perceval de Grandmaison, the tragic actor ; Guiraud, Soumet, Alfred de Vigny, Saintine, Victor Hugo, *l'enfant sublime* ; Ancelot, Lacretelle, Lemontey, Baour-Lormian, Casimir Bonjour, Edouard Mennechet, Emile Deschamps, de Laville de Miremont, who wrote plays in verse ; the Comte de Rességuier ; Michel Beer, brother of Meyer Beer ; Armand Malitourne ; and many painters and musicians. Mme. Sophie Gay, who had a small circle of her own, was a constant guest, together with her charming daughter, Delphine, the future authoress of "Le Lorgnon" and "La Canne de M. de Balzac."

Mme. Ancelot was herself an authoress, both successful and popular. She had a gift for unravelling the characters and actions of her guests, who were almost all of them connected in some way with literature. She was delightful in private life, simple, cheerful, and sensible. The painters Gérard, Guérin, Gros, and Girodet—the four G.'s, as they were dubbed—were constant attendants at her literary gatherings ; while science and learning were worthily represented by Cuvier and Laplace.

Mme. Lebrun, the sister of the poet Vigée, whose talent wins more and more admiration as time rolls on, and who, in spite of her acknowledged four-and-sixty years, still preserved her youthful appearance, had finally settled down in Paris, after her endless wanderings across Europe, and

THE GARDENS OF THE TUILERIES

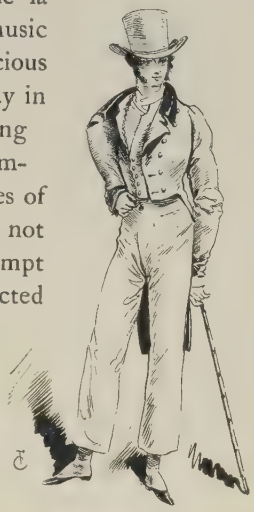
Near the Rue de Rivoli (1819).



THE GREAT LONGCHAMPS DAY

(*1820*).

her house was frequented by all that was foremost and best, both in Literature and Art. The hand of the charming artist who had been the friend of Rivarol, of Champcenetz and Grimod de la Reynière had not lost its cunning, and her passion for music drew all the best *virtuosi* in Paris to her house. Her spacious rooms in the Rue Saint-Lazare were open every Saturday in winter. In the summer she entertained in the charming house she had purchased at Louveciennes. All the remnant of the old Court, all the survivors of the last glories of Versailles, were to be met in Mme. Lebrun's house, and not a few distinguished foreigners besides. She made an attempt to revive the amusements of former times. Her guests acted proverbs and charades, and even entertained themselves with harmless games. But the atmosphere of the new *régime* and its general tendency to philosophy and sentimentality was but little in sympathy with these simple and unambitious joys. The most constant *habitués* of Mme. Lebrun's circle were the young Marquis de Custine, the Comte de Laugeron, and the Comte de Saint-Priest, both just returned from Russia, where they had taken service during Napoleon's reign; Baron Gérard, the Comte de Vaudreuil, and the Marquis de Rivière; the beautiful Mme. Grassini, whose deep contralto was still as fresh as ever, though its owner was long past her youth; the Comte de la Tour du Pin de la Charce, the very type of a *grand seigneur*, with all the urbanity and fine manner of the eighteenth century; and the Marquis de Boufflers, assistant curator of the Bibliothèque Mazarine—a short, fat, gouty, ill-dressed old gentleman, whom no one would have taken to be the once brilliant poet and cavalier, the author of "Aline," the passionate and devoted lover of Mme. de Sabran!



1819

1819

The receptions given by Baron Gérard in the small and unpretentious house built after his own plans, in the Rue Bonaparte, opposite the church of St. Germain des Prés, were usually most agreeable. The reception-rooms were four in number, and small in size. Mme. Godefroy, an elderly lady, a former pupil of the great artist, assisted Mme. Gérard to receive her guests. These arrived, according to the

Italian fashion, towards midnight. Tea was served, accompanied by some very unpretentious cakes. Gérard talked the while with all that wit and spirit which earned him the universal admiration of his contemporaries. His wife, a ferocious whist-player, sat down to cards, and then the great painter and his numerous friends fell into easy and intimate conversation. Mlle. Mars, Talma, the actor, Mme. Ancelot, Mlle. Delphine Gay, Mérimée, Jacquemont, the Comte Lowœnhielm, Henry Beyle, that arch lover of paradox, Eugéne Delacroix, and occasionally Humboldt, the Abbé de Pradt, the Comte de Forbin, Pozzo di Borgo, the Comte de Saint-Aignan, Baron Desnoyers, Cuvier, Heim, and many other celebrities, long since forgotten, were almost certain to appear in the hospitable painter's house on Wednesday evenings.

1820

Society often foregathered, too, round the Duchesse d'Abrantès, widow of the dashing Junot, and round the learned Charles Nodier, whose reception-rooms were the lists in which literary men of the two schools, classic and romantic, gave each other battle. Those who loved lighter entertainment sought the house of the Vicomte d'Arlincourt, or that of M. de Montyon, an evergreen beau, who still clung to the powder and the picturesque dress of his younger days. Politics were discussed, twice a week, at Mme. de Boigne's house in the Rue de Lille, where none but the *fine fleur* of the Faubourg St. Germain ever appeared. Now and again some rash spirits would adventure themselves into the *salon* of Mme. de Chastenay, where the Vicomte de Saint-Priest declaimed tragedies and comedies of the most unintelligible description, without a touch of pity for his unhappy auditors. Mme. de Flahaut entertained many guests in her house on the Champs Elysées; but the majority of these last-named *salons* belonged to the beginning of the reign of Louis Philippe, rather than to the close of that of Charles X. The true "History of Society" under the Restoration has yet to be written, and should prove a most attractive theme. It saw the birth, in different circles, of all the eminent men, literary, artistic and political, who have adorned this nineteenth century of ours.

Most of the greatest intellects which have adorned it were shaped amidst the brilliant surroundings of the Restoration period, one of the most prolific, in that respect, the world has ever seen.

Paris society was broken up, under the Restoration, into distinct classes, each established, and, so to speak, confined, within the borders of its own quarter of the town. There were "good sets" in the Marais, in the Chaussée d'Antin, and in the "Faubourg," besides the easy-going communities, consisting of artists and their hangers-on, who waged uncompromising war against the tyranny of social conventions.

Let us follow a contemporary writer, M. Antoine Caillot, into a drawing-room in the Faubourg St. Germain: "Seated in a semicircle before a blazing fire, in large armchairs covered with tapestry or crimson damask, with gilded feet and mounts, we find two peers of France, two deputies of the Right, one general officer, one bishop, one abbé wearing a decoration, and two old dowagers. These grave personages are talking over bygone days, and comparing them with the present. The two old dames, duchesses or *marquises*, declare nothing can look more ridiculous than trousers, and hair cut *à la Titus*. Yet the two peers, the deputies, and the lieutenant-general in his Majesty's army, are all wearing trousers, and their hair closely cropped! Neither of the old ladies appears to recollect the time when she could not endure the mention of the word 'breeches,' and when she turned away her head and cried 'Oh fie!' whenever her eye fell on a nether garment which appeared too tight.

"In the next room we shall find two old gentlemen, knights of St. Louis, of Malta, and of the Legion of Honour, absorbed in a desperate encounter at *tric-trac*, and six paces away from them, a *garde du corps* and a lieutenant in the King's Guard, playing *écarté* with two youthful baronesses or countesses. The hostess is engaged in a solemn game of piquet with one of the King's chaplains. Now and again some piece of intelligence, filtering out from this assembly, throws stock-brokers and journalists into agitation, sets minds on the stretch, and pens in constant motion."

1820

If we turn from the nobles by descent, to the aristocracy of finance, from the world of dulness to the world of jobbery, we shall probably find ourselves in a suite of reception-rooms all on the same floor. One contains a billiard-table, in the next there are two *écarté*-tables, in the third a crowd of men talking politics and finance, and women chattering about fashions and theatres. The furniture is by Jacob, the bronze figures by Ravrio, the pretty trifles from the "Petit Dunkerque," the

fashionable emporium of the moment. There are quantities of ices and dainty cakes, and refreshments of every description. A studied air of good breeding, an over-elaboration of good manners, is the distinguishing feature of those gatherings of rich manufacturers, bankers and stockbrokers. The few artists who have strayed into these plutocratic halls look, as they feel, miserable. Speculators and professional diners-out pay interested court to the ladies. As the current saying goes, there is more tattle than real talk in the Chaussée d'Antin drawing-room.

Moving on to the Marais, we enter an ancient house adorned with sober-tinted gilding. The old-fashioned furniture is in beautiful taste, there are fine pictures and well-chosen tapestries, and everything to indicate that the owner's fortune is not of modern growth. A great fire burns in the huge fireplace, no lamps are to be seen, nothing but candelabra with seven lights on each. Old servants in livery announce the guests, all of them men of the most scrupulous politeness, and the greatest affability of manner. Three whist-tables, one piquet-table, and an *écarté*-table for the young folks, have been prepared. The older members of the party will sit round the fire and discuss the indemnity granted to the *émigrés*, M. de Villèle and his three per cents., General Foy and the Emperor Alexander, Bonaparte, St. Helena, the Bourbons, M. de Chateaubriand and Benjamin Constant, and all the numerous questions and incidents of the moment.

1820

In the drawing-rooms of more modest citizens, society meets in the most informal fashion, to drink tea, and eat *méringues à la crème*, and gather round a huge table where *Schniff*, *Chat qui dort*, *Trottain*, *La Peur*, *A l'as qui court*, and many another harmless and merry game will proceed, amidst shouts of laughter evoked by the jests and quips of the wags of the party.

A writer in the *Journal des Dames et des Modes de* 1817 has left us, over his *nom de plume—L'Indécis*—a very dainty sketch of a young Parisian lady of that period. "She has beautiful fair hair gathered in plaits upon her head. A small cashmere shawl is cast carelessly about her shoulders, her neck is dazzlingly white, and her eyes sometimes glow with an ardour that burns you through and through, and sometimes droop in a languor that utterly enslaves you.

"She is slender and fairy-footed, her figure is supple and voluptuous; when she sits at her harp, she sways as her fingers touch the cords, and her innate grace transports you with delight. She is Sappho and Corinne in one!

1821

"What was that name? *Corinne!* Ah, my eyes brim with tears! The memory of those touching strains, those happy days, that exquisite voice, is overwhelming! . . .

"But hark! I hear a bell. Here is a pretty milliner, laden with flowers and laces. The dainty trifles are cast in all directions, over the harp, over the chairs, upon the floor. My lady fair tries on a bonnet, walks up and down before her mirror, pouts, looks closer, smiles, finds fault, calls everything frightful, and sends it all away.

"Then she stretches herself on her couch, takes up a book, reads, or, as I fancy, makes believe. She looks at me; I venture near her; she starts up angrily, bids me begone, declares she has the headache, clings to me, vows she is suffering, unhappy—most unhappy!

"Justine, the discreet, appears with a letter for her mistress. She opens it feverishly; I beg leave to see it, but she tears it up. Then, drawing from her bosom a tiny pocket-book, she tears a leaf and writes a pencilled answer—two words, two cyphers, two symbolic marks. Vexed at last by all this mystery, I demand an explanation—*I insist on knowing!* How like a husband! She laughs at my fury, sits down to her embroidery-frame—she needs quiet, she says—and works on the wreath of myrtle and roses traced on one corner of a pocket-handkerchief. On the other corner is Cupid with his wings and quivers, while the third and fourth are appropriately adorned. The whole design is anacreontic, and the various subjects have been culled from the vignettes in the 'Petit Almanach des Dames.'

"But before long, handkerchief and embroidery-frame are pushed aside, the carriage rolls to the door, and the divinity mounts her moving throne. Her rapid movements render her physical charms still more apparent. The attentive eye is rewarded by a glimpse of an engraved and highly symbolic garter-clasp, adorning an exquisitely proportioned leg.

"Fascinated, allured, bewildered, dazed by her seductions, I follow her into the carriage. We drive to the Montagnes Beaujon, to the Champs Elysées, to the Tuileries, to the Combat des Montagnes, to

Tortoni's, to the Boulevard de Gand—I should be lost in the whirlwind but for the lovely star that guides my feet and lights my path."

1822

Here we have a pleasing picture, still wonderfully fresh, of the manner in which part of a fine lady's day was spent, in the year of grace 1817.

Early in August 1815, the Boulevard de Gand had become the favourite resort of the opulent classes. They were there, not merely in crowds, but in perfect mobs. Many an appointment to meet failed by reason of the press. This portion of the Boulevard—an *allée* as it was then called—offered a twofold interest to the curious spectator. There beauty appeared in all its charm and splendour, and there, too, the professional coquette strained every resource at her command. Thither the belle repaired to show off her toilettes—her embroidered openworked gown, her silk bonnet with its nodding cluster of marabout feathers, held in place by a Provence rose, her Scotch great-coat, and satin buskins. There did the "ladies' man," the drawing-room hero, relate his bygone conquests, and his future plans. There the banker contrived to spend a few hours daily, there many a worthy citizen's ambitious spouse betook herself, to espy the newest fashions, and, returning to her good-natured lord, work on his feelings and relieve his purse, to gratify her woman's vanity.

No lady emerged from the crowd without sorely crushed and rumpled garments, and she must e'en be thankful if she did not leave half her flounces on the spur which every fashionable young man was bound to wear, whether he rode or walked.

From the Boulevard de Gand, the gay world moved on to Tortoni's, which had just been redecorated, and shone with white and gold panelling. Ladies had no hesitation about entering this establishment, which seemed specially devoted to their use. All the charming young women in the capital were to be seen there, and an hour or more would be spent in a leisurely consumption of iced punch and *sorbets*, and in nibbling cakes and biscuits.

The breakfasts at Tortoni's were better than those at the Café

INSIDE THE BOULOGNE PANORAMA

(*1824*).

THE THÉATRE DE MADAME
(*1827*).

Anglais, at Hardy's, Gobillard's, or Véfour's. The viands were light, indeed—*papillotes de levraut*, or salmon cutlets—but the cookery was of the daintiest description. The male patrons of Tortoni were divided into two distinct classes—the Stock Exchange set and the fashionable set, most of whom were somewhat Bœotian in their tastes. The first set arrived at about ten o'clock, and after a light breakfast, began forthwith to gamble furiously in stocks and shares. This continued from eleven o'clock till one. The noise was diabolical, everybody shouted at once, traffic went on in every direction, and an enormous amount of stocks daily changed hands.

Meanwhile, on the floor below, the yellow-gloved confraternity was gathered, in all the glory of boots with pointed toes, and spurs, English dress-coats, gaiters and canes. The talk was all of dogs and horses, carriages and harness, saddles, racing and hunting. This was the *Salon des Centaures*.

Often, as the afternoon wore on, centaurs and financiers met, cigar in hand, on the wooden *perron* which divided the *café* from the Boulevard. For at this hour carriages began to drive up in shoals, and the correct thing was to be able to quote the name of every fair creature who passed within the doors of the famous restaurant.

At the close of the summer of 1816, it became the fashion to go from Tortoni's to the Quai Voltaire, and stare at the first steamboat which ever ran between Paris and Rouen. The smart ladies and their attendant dandies stepped out of their cabriolets and tilburies, and had themselves rowed in a boat to the point where the new vessel lay. They asked scores of questions, in the laziest and most indifferent way, and never waited for an answer. They looked about them, at the running water, ogled the women on the bridges, glanced towards the Bains Vigier, which were still in high fashion; then back they went to their carriages, and departed to the Jardin des Montagnes Russes, at the end of the Boulevard du Roule, on the old Neuilly road.

1822

These erections were the great mania of the period, and by degrees every quarter in Paris had its own, to which crowds of pleasure-seekers gladly flocked. There were Montagnes Russes in the Faubourg Poissonnière, at the Barrière des Trois Couronnes, in the Champs Elysées, on the Boulevard Montparnasse, and all were patronised

with an eagerness which justified the calculations of their proprietors. The taste percolated right down to the humbler classes of society. The artisan and the *grisette* dreamt of the giddy steep all through the week, and enjoyed the fruition of their dreams on Sundays. The Montagnes Russes found imitators—the Montagnes Suisses. The owners of these places reaped rich harvests, and the mania, which did not die out till towards 1835, was even put upon the stage by contemporary dramatists. The Montagnes Russes were acted, sung, and actually devoured! They inspired the song-writer Oury with some merry rhymes, and furnished the subject for a very curious *tableau* at the Vaudeville Theatre. And to crown all, they gave their name to a most delicious bonbon, which made the fortune of two confectioners, whose fame may fairly be said to have flown from mouth to mouth.

1822

All the most fashionable set went to the Montagnes Russes in the Jardin Beaujon. Ladies delighted in showing off their dresses and their graceful attitudes—standing upright in the car, waving a shawl above their heads, like dancing nymphs. Couples went together, husband and wife, lover and mistress, whirling noisily by, the lady clinging to her protector, and generally giving vent to little screams of terror, whereby the spectators were vastly entertained.

The brave and sometimes foolhardy proceedings of slim and fearless nymphs, who shot like elves down the giddy slopes, were greeted with applause—but shouts of ironic mirth filled the air whenever some fat and simpering dame had herself hoisted to her seat, and thundered, like an avalanche, up and down the bends and windings of the mock precipice.

1823

Close to the Jardin Beaujon there was a restaurant, famous for its delicate cookery. Here elegantly decorated rooms awaited the rich banker, the open-handed youth, the mighty noble, the frivolous woman of pleasure—and here they all enjoyed the unspeakable delight of throwing their money out of window—the great object, seemingly, of the gay revellers of 1820.

ENTERING THE "COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE"

(*1828*).

A WINTER STROLL IN THE LUXEMBOURG GARDENS
(1830).

There was no lack of means of entertainment under the Restoration. Tennis had begun again, in the great square of the Champs Elysées. Bowls and skittles were also played, with the greatest eagerness. The last-named game was also called "Jeu de Siam." All the men who did not stupefy their senses in the Palais-Royal hells, spent much time in athletic exercises, swimming and riding, and walking, thus laying the foundations of the sturdy and solid generation of 1830, which Frenchmen may fairly consider the most glorious of this astounding century.

In the matter of horsemanship, especially, the Restoration had wrought a change. Those *émigrés* who had spent many years in England, had brought back, among other British customs, a particular method of sitting and managing their steeds, and soon all horses, and even most of the Court carriages, were turned out in the English style. The French system of equitation was quite put aside, for the time, and every rider in public places, on the Boulevards, and in the Bois de Boulogne, was to be seen swaying his body to the motion of his mount. Jockeys in leather breeches, riding English horses, appeared on every side. The number of persons who took to the saddle so greatly increased, that a whole regiment of the National Guard was exclusively composed of gentlemen riding their own horses, and wearing a most becoming uniform.

This increased practice of athletics among the youth of the capital had a most beneficial effect on public morality. Debauchery became less rampant than under the Empire, and a favourable reaction was everywhere evident. Most of the permanent ball-rooms, which had been a mere pretext for prostitution, were either deserted or closed. The theatrical censors took care that decency should not be publicly outraged, and the obscenities formerly poured forth by mountebanks and such folk, whose songs and gestures had a lamentable influence on the common people, who crowded to admire and applaud them, were no longer heard.

Amidst all the gay doings and many entertainments which enlivened the reigns of Louis XVIII. and Charles X. there sounded a note, struck by the fair sex, of melancholy, of lost illusions, of sadness which made all earthly pleasures hollow. Any one listening to their complaints, their sentimental speeches, their philosophic disquisitions on the blessings of independence, and of a sedentary calm, might have taken them for

the unhappy victims of social convention. Every woman seemed to pine for a life of country retirement, solitary, save for one loved companion, in a desert, which, under her love and tenderness, was to blossom like the rose. They all declared themselves martyrs to their worldly duties, to their husband's position, to the future of the daughters whom they had to take to balls. Their feverish existence, so commonplace, so full of frivolity and lies, which ground them down, and wore them out in body and soul, was, so they vowed, the very opposite of that life to which their noblest feelings and their deepest longing tended. What sighs they had heaved, what secret tears they had wept! and to hear them talk! "Mme. X.'s parties were intellectual starvation. Dinners and balls had almost worn them out. What a hateful thing to be obliged to spend four hours every day over one's dress!" The Comédie Française was pronounced dull, and the Opera tiresome. Brunet and Potier were lamentably poor. Monrose was heartbreaking, Perlet phlegmatic and boring, Bobêche vulgar, and all the while the grumblers were spending huge sums in shawls and gowns and finery, fighting for introductions and invitations, intriguing to be seen at every entertainment, rushing to every merrymaking, every chance concert, play, and rout, which fell in their way.

Woman under the Restoration, in fact, like woman in all time, was full of curiosities, thirsty for novelty, in love with new experiences; wherever she wandered, in her search after strong sensations and sudden emotions, she carried her weariness with her, and she was well aware that if she desired masculine love, she must never fail to use feminine coquetry. Still it must be confessed that the French woman of the year 1815, and the five following, strikes us as having lost something of her charm.

She is gloomy, prudish, pessimistic, as strait-laced in her morals as in her gowns. She has none of the charm of the Empire beauty, and gives no promise of the mighty seduction wielded by the belles of the Romantic period.

CHAPTER V

THE FAIR PARISIAN IN 1830

MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND REFINEMENT OF THE BELLES OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

LOOKING back on the year 1830, we clearly perceive that the feminine type which found most admirers, and queened it over every other, was that so well described by Balzac—the woman of some thirty summers, in the very heyday and summer of her matured beauty. Such a lady, cold in manner and in heart, in love with no one but herself, sighed for universal homage, and trained her various vanities like fruit-trees on a wall, to catch the false but intoxicating beams of the sun of flattery. Her one object was to enjoy all the emotions, and taste all the joys, of the professional coquette. To keep her footing as a fashionable belle, at such a moment, when glory and caprice went hand in hand, needed as much cleverness as good fortune, as much skill as beauty, as many wary calculations as lucky turns of chance. She had been forced to set aside her whims and fancies, and even the dictates of her heart; she had been driven, in short, to balance the scales of her existence with a steady hand, with wisest prudence and profoundest policy, lest she should lose her coveted position, as much exposed to daily attack as that of any prime minister.

Let us venture into the sleeping chamber of one of these beauties, late one morning in the year 1830, just at the hour when she wakes from her slumbers.

A cloud of delicate perfume rises from a basket of flowers, set on a gilded tripod, and the torch of a tiny Cupid, glowing with enamel, and set with precious stones, sheds its tender light over the sleeping beauty's chamber. The soft ray, reflected, here, from the mirror, shimmers, there, on draperies of azure silk, and reveals a scene of dainty disorder, strewn with the paraphernalia of a life of pleasure, with the treasures of a successful coquette, and even with others of a more sentimental order—cashmere shawls, cast carelessly aside, ribbons and gauzes in a score of shades, awaiting the fair lady's selection, books, feathers, flowers, precious gems, extracts from favourite authors and unfinished manuscripts, an embroidery frame, with the needle left in the work, an album full of half-completed sketches and portraits. It is the sanctuary, in fact, of a prosperous woman's home. The furniture is of the style considered, in those days, sumptuous—Gothic decoration, bright and pleasing pictures. A clock adorned with emblematic figures strikes the hour of eleven, and rouses the lovely sleeper, whose fair features and graceful form stamp her a queen of fashion, in all the glory of her youth and beauty.

1825

Slowly the belle awakes, and her eyes, still heavy with slumber, rove round the darkened room. She stretches her limbs in languid enjoyment of the warmth of her soft couch, passes her hand across her forehead, still heated with the fatigues of the preceding evening, and a tiny, lazy sigh escapes her ruby lips. At last she rings her bell, and summons her maids to assist her in her morning toilet. She dons a wrapper of white jaconet, with a narrow embroidery running round the hem, a cambric chemisette, with turned-down collar trimmed with Valenciennes, and cuffs to match. To this she adds a small silk apron, of an ash-grey shade, trimmed with a wreath of embroidered work in brilliant colours. A lace scarf, thrown over her head, is knotted under the chin, and she wears straw-coloured kid mittens, with black embroideries. On her feet are tiny tent-stitch slippers, edged with a narrow plaited and goffered ribbon, like those worn by Mme. de Pompadour. Thus attired, she enters the dining-room, where her breakfast is served—a light, tempting meal, fit for a fairy queen, with a tiny glass of Rancio to wash it down.

Breakfast over, our fashionable fair, as soon as the Spring sunshine

comes, will put on a gown of the material known as *challis*, with a pattern of bouquets sprinkled all over it, or else striped with tiny garlands of flowers. The body is draped, or arranged like a shawl, under a *canezou* with long embroidered muslin sleeves. She will wear a plain gauze scarf, and a belt and wristlets of *chiné* ribbon. Her head will be adorned with a simple but coquettish bonnet of rice straw, with a plume of feathers, and her feet shod with light-coloured silk boots. In this garb she will descend to her door, and enter her splendid carriage, which will bear her about the town, and to the houses of several other fashionable ladies, whose reception-days are duly inscribed on her little ivory tablets.

Conversation, during these visits, touches every kind of subject. Inquiries are made, and answers given, concerning the latest modes in flowers and ribbons; some interesting pamphlet, or some poem full of dainty imagery, is read aloud. There are discussions on music, on painting, even on points of doctrine. Rosy lips speak hard things of the current period, or discourse the Machiavelianism of the moment—and all this in the calmest, most correct, and moderate of manners, with due attention to the graceful fall of the speaker's skirt, the smartness of her tiny shoe, the dainty curve of her waist, and the smallness of her well-gloved hand. But dress and theatrical matters are the staple themes.

1825

Listen, kind readers!

"Marquise, have you seen *Le Bon Ton* to-day?" "No, dear Baroness, I haven't indeed, although I take it, and the *Gazette des Salons*, and the *Journal des Dames et des Modes* as well!"

"There is a new fashion in it, which I have only seen once, at My Lord S.'s tea-party." "How *can* the pattern have got into the papers?" "Just imagine, my dear, a poppy-coloured velvet gown, with a Grecian body, edged with a narrow gold embroidery! Under the folds on the body, which stand out full, just like those in the antique draperies, an under body of white satin, also edged with a narrow gold embroidery, which heads a very narrow blonde, laid on quite flat. A double velvet drapery drawn up and fastened with a gold clasp on the shoulder, falls over an under sleeve of blonde, in a striped pattern, and gathered close at the wrist." "But, my dear creature, it must be perfectly delicious!" "Wait, wait,

there's more to come! To carry out the costume, which was quite in the *odalisque* style, and covered with diamonds, too, there was a white and gold gauze turban, with two birds of paradise set back to back." "Heavens, what a lovely toilette!" "Indeed, my dear Marquise, I can't quite make up my mind whether I will not have one like it—although I am short, and it really is more suited to those monstrously tall ladies of the Empire, who are as dull as they can be, in spite of their airs and graces."

"Were you at the Opera the night before last, dearest Baroness?" "To be sure I was! They played 'Robert,' an opera I dote on. Those floods of touching and delicious harmonies absolutely intoxicate my brain. Yet I think Mme. Damoreau rather poor, and Nourrit too exaggerated in his play, and I wish we had Levasseur and Mlle. Drus back again." "Well, for my part, I am looking forward to the pleasure of seeing Taglioni in the 'Sylphide.' She is perfectly irresistible, I am told, and the house is crammed whenever she appears." "But, my dear child, do you mean to tell me you haven't seen her yet? That's perfectly absurd! You must go at once!"

Such was the talk during these morning calls, and we may add that each fair lady strove to be witty, that slander was rife, that mannerism reigned unchecked, that all the tarnished glories of Dame Fashion were lauded to the skies, and that fresher laurels were very rarely culled. There was no natural simplicity of utterance, and there was a world of affectation, and an immense amount of skilful dissimulation. Certain fashionable phrases were heard in every corner.

1825

"Have you seen the Dey of Algiers? Dom Pedro? The young Empress of Brazil?" These were all questions everybody asked, and any one with any pretension to civilisation was bound to reply that she had seen the dethroned Dey, who called himself "Hussein" on his visiting-cards, dined off two boiled chickens, and locked up his wives as jealously as if they had been banknotes.

It was indispensable, too, for every fine lady to assert that Dom Pedro looked noble and cold, and a trifle melancholy, and that his uniform coat set off his figure to perfection; and to add, on pain of being dubbed ignorant and countrified, that his young and pretty wife was radiant with youth and beauty, and did not need an imperial diadem to enhance her charms.

SUNDAY AT THE TUILERIES

(1831).

IN THE CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES
(*1832*).

Her visits over, our fashionable lady still finds time to turn into the Exhibition of Pictures, and note the efforts of the modern school. The fact of being unescorted gives her no pause, for the time when women feared to go unattended into public places is long since gone by. She is sure to fall in with plenty of young dandies, the very pink of fashion, to flutter round her, and help her to criticise the pictures.

1828

The names of Horace Vernet, Delaroche, Decamps, Couture, Ingres, Delacroix, Scheffer, and Dubufe, salute her ears from every quarter, as she moves down the long rooms hung with canvases. She pauses an instant before Scheffer's "Marguerite," and mingles in the group deep in eager discussion of the mystic colouring inspired by the painter's study of Goethe, and the weird and curious charm of the whole composition. The picture of Jane Gray, by Delaroche, also arrests her steps. She is much struck by the figure of the executioner, and specially admires the indefinable and touching melancholy of the unhappy heroine's expression. She hears it whispered that the painter's model for the headsman's lovely victim is reported to be no less a person than Mme. Anaïs, a beautiful *sociétaire* of the Comédie Française; and, being resolved to know everything, she straightway tells her friends the story, vouching for its truth with an assertion that she had it from the artist's own lips.

1829

Giddy and dazed with flattery's incense, our fair one seeks her home at last; her maids disrobe her, and she submits herself to the hands of her hair-dresser, a famous artist, who unites the skill of the physiognomist, the chemist, the draughtsman and the geometrician. This gentle executioner takes her lovely head and gazes at it with close attention. Next, compass in hand, he marks out curves and angles and triangles, he notes the distances between the brows, makes sure of the proportions of the mask, and carefully compares the proportions of the two sides of the forehead with those of the two sides of the face, where it falls away towards the lobe of the ear. Then he invents a coiffure which shall soften down any defects in his fair employer's beauty. He gathers up her tresses *à la Chinoise*, and draws them smoothly over her temples, so that

her white forehead may shine out in all its purity of line and colour. Now and again, if so the fancy takes him, he twists great plaits, and piles the top of her head with huge and skilfully arranged loops of hair, leaving on each side a mass of feathery curls most artfully disposed. He answers all her questions gently and respectfully. He does not invariably wait for her to question him, and is fond of retailing anecdotes picked up in the course of his rounds, or in the newspapers.

1830

The hairdresser of the year 1830 is "romantic" above all other things. But he has the art of posing as a Ministerialist, a Liberal or a Royalist, according to the house in which he plies his trade. He can quote the *Drapeau Blanc*, the *Journal des Débats*, or the *Quotidienne*, with a fine impartiality. When he has crowned the edifice he has so tastefully constructed with flowers, feathers, an aigrette, jewelled pins, or a sumptuous diadem, our *Figaro* takes his leave, and the lady puts on her gown of flowered muslin, with short sleeves and low body, *à la vierge*. She adds a few more jewels, earrings and a necklace, and then she condescends to be informed that dinner waits.

A woman's dinner, during the reign of Romanticism, never lasted long. Gastronomy did not appeal to the current feminine taste. The positive side of life had changed its place, and become a mere accessory ; woman's pleasures were all of the intellect. She longed for a life of thought, and sighed for enjoyments which should answer to the flights of her refined imagination. Delicate food and rich banquets struck no answering chord in her, the Byronic sentiment of the age had driven all that far from her. The very acme of good breeding was to half starve oneself, and drink naught but the dews from heaven. She pined for the wild excitement and strong emotions of political strife, for the exaggerated sentiment of the savage school of poetry, for the improbable love scenes of the stage, and the poignant situations of the most blood-curdling tragedies. This delirious whirl of action and thought, and wild extravagant dreams, enchanted the fashionable lady of 1830. She would never acknowledge herself satisfied with what life could give her, until she found herself broken down, dishevelled in mind and body, utterly worn out by a succession of the most terrifying experiences.

When evening falls, our gay lady pays a visit to some theatre, before

going on to a ball. Her favourite resorts are the Comédie Française, or the Renaissance, where she can steep her fancy in the outrageous scenes of the new and extravagant dramatic school. She feels all the passions of its heroes, she shares their ecstasies and their anguish. Their crimes, their wild and passionate claspings, their tears, their deep delights, their strange whims, and their excruciating sufferings, fill her soul with the deepest enjoyment, and wring it with the fiercest anguish.

She leaves the precincts of the theatre, and straightway the giddy world's hand is on her, and swallows her up once more.

When, at last, she lays her tired head down under her lace nightcap, her brain teems with illusions, and her heart rings with a vague melody, like the sound of the sea in an empty shell. But when the morning sun wakes her from slumber, the memory seems like an empty dream, and, obedient to Fashion's beckoning finger, she follows the fickle goddess, who is pleased to grant her an ephemeral and dependent sovereignty, and set her up, an idol, to receive the hollow and transient worship of the crowd.

There was not a social gathering in Paris, under the July Monarchy, from which the fair sex was excluded. They were welcomed everywhere, either by reason of their beauty or their intellectual merit. In the ball-room, at the Chamber, at the play, at the sermons of the St. Simonians, at the various artistic societies' meetings, in the Bois—wherever, in short, there was any stir, whether commercial or intellectual, women were certain to be present. Even the Bourse had an attraction for them, which it is hard to reconcile with the gay and laughter-loving countenances of the pretty speculators. A very serious newspaper, the *Constitutionnel*, thus delivers itself on this subject:

1831

"The mania for gambling on the Bourse has increased in the most extraordinary manner, during the last few months. The very ladies are bitten with it, and they understand and talk the technical jargon of that place as easily as the most experienced stockbroker. They study rates and *contangos* as closely as the slyest outside broker. Every day, between half-past one and half-past three, the galleries of the Bourse are crowded with smart women, whose eyes are glued to the floor of the hall, and who keep up correspondence with their stockbrokers by means of signs. There are even female stockjobbers, who receive orders

and transmit them to clerks sent to meet them outside the Bourse. We will not mention names, but we may state that the most prosperous of the lady speculators, after winning a great fortune by her successes on the stage, now increases it by her personal transactions on the Bourse."* Ladies who frequented the Bourse adopted a simple and suitable style of dress, almost invariably consisting of a cloak, and a close black velvet bonnet, with a black silk lace veil; a little sandal-wood note-book with a gold pencil was thrust into the belt.

1831

On Sundays, when the St. Simonian doctrine was preached in the Salle Taitbout, all the best pit boxes were filled by elegantly attired ladies. It was the correct thing to go and listen to these sermons, either for the sake of learning the nature of the new doctrine, or to be in a position to oppose its principles, or at all events to enjoy the flights of a really extraordinary eloquence, and gauge the value of a fresh idea, presented in a most attractive form. The real object of the majority of the ladies present was to keep themselves well posted on one of the subjects of fashionable conversation, and to try to understand how the system of community could ever come to replace the hereditary system. The seductive sophistries of the new religion were put forward by young and eager apostles, whose influence was due as much to their personal charm, as to their brilliant oratory. And the St. Simonian theory by no means forbade the presence of female coquetry and grace, if we may draw our conclusions from the extreme elegance affected by the leading feminine professors of its doctrines. All the most elaborate headdresses, gowns and fal-lals, sent out by Herbaut, Victorine, Palmyre, and Mme. Minette, the fashionable tradesmen of the day, were to be seen in the Salle Taitbout. As the ladies attending these gatherings found large cloaks inconveniently in the way, they generally preferred appearing in wadded gowns of the thickest satin, or velvet dresses, with lace tuckers, over which cashmere shawls were thrown, with a boa twisted round the neck.

In the Chamber of Deputies, the pretty faces and dainty figures of the feminine section of the audience contrasted quaintly with the dry political subjects and diplomatic questions under discussion. Those ladies who, at the great receptions in the winter season, were noted for

* Probably Mme. Alice Ozy.

A CORNER ON THE BOULEVARD DES ITALIENS
(*1833*).

DANDYISM IN THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

A Ballroom in 1834.

their splendid dress and social successes, all crowded to hear the speeches. The galleries were a sea of feathers, and cashmere shawls, and sumptuous furs, and overflowed with satin and velvet wraps, cloaks of Thibetan fur, and richly patterned stuffs. When the sitting closed, the ladies would linger under the peristyle of the building, twittering like merry birds, talking over the current topics of the day, gossiping about the fashions, and scanning each other's gowns, till the lateness of the hour drove them into their carriages, and sent them homewards, to prepare for fresh triumphs.

Riding became more and more fashionable among women between 1830 and 1835. At one moment, the French ladies almost vied with their English sisters in this respect. Horsewomen were to be seen in every direction. The correct thing was for each lady to be attended by several cavaliers, who rode beside her, and also by a liveried groom, who kept at a respectful distance in her rear. The fair riders left their carriages at the city gates, or at the entrance of the Bois de Boulogne.

Riding-dress suffered but little change at the hand of fashion. Most ladies wore a cloth skirt and a cambric jacket, with a narrow frill round the neck, held by a silk cravat, either in a checked pattern, or matching the skirt in colour. The strapped riding trousers were of drill, and boots, reindeer gloves, a rhinoceros-hide switch, or a cane, supplied by the famous Verdier, completed the costume. Hats varied. Some riders wore a silk hat with argus feathers—some a cap, military or civilian—and some a beaver headcovering, which gave the pretty wearers a certain bold and boyish air, most eminently becoming to them.

1831

In summer time, all the world of Paris crowded to the Tuileries and the Champs Elysées. From eight to nine o'clock, on June and July evenings, the Tuileries Gardens were literally crammed. The wide pathway was much more like a crowded indoor gallery, than like an open-air resort whither the townsfolk repair to lounge at their ease, and inhale great draughts of oxygen. Hither came bands of dandies, talking of politics and revolution, of women and of wine, to idle away the *entre-acte* of some play, or cool their heads after some noisy dinner-party. Hither, too, flocked groups of wasp-waisted beauties, fashionable courtesans, and smart society ladies, all attended by their

swains, to show off their gowns, take a couple of turns round the Allée des Orangers, and then settle down in circles, and chatter first of some new play and then of yesterday's riot, or to-morrow's, and so on to the last new bonnet, to some newspaper discussion, to the scandal reported of some foreign minister, to the catastrophes in Brazil or Poland, and now and again, perhaps, to the deep pathos of some new poet's work.

Every section of smart society was also to be seen in the Champs Elysées. A portion of that magnificent promenade had been turned into a huge concert hall, and every one who was anybody took care to be seen in it. The powerful and rhythmic strains of Musard's orchestra resounded from the centre of the arena, an immense space was railed off from the general public, and there were tents in case of bad weather, so that the audience was free to enjoy itself without the slightest touch of anxiety. Everything possible, in fact, was done to promote the success of these delightful outdoor entertainments, which took place every evening, and lasted until midnight.

1831

Many charming members of the mercantile and middle classes gathered at the Jardin Turc, in the Marais, to listen to Tolbecque's orchestra. This garden, with its leafy groves, and rustic summer-houses, in which the glasses of foaming beer went gaily round, formed a picture worthy of the pencil of Debucourt. The worthy citizens of the Marais were by no means concerned to hide their married happiness and domestic contentment. Many a happy mother, in her pretty pink gingham gown, and her shawl pinned on each shoulder, watched her little ones gambol beneath the trees. There were young sparks too, from the Ile St. Louis, sitting at round tables with merry *grisettes*, whose cherry lips curved in constant laughter, and whose straying curls escaped beneath their light straw hats. The marriageable young men of the quarter sauntered, each by himself, in search of a likely wife, or attractive mistress, looking stiff and self-satisfied enough in high neckcloths and canary-coloured gloves, and diffusing an odour of bergamot from carefully curled heads.

The Boulevard de Gand was a great resort in summer time. Carriages laden with pretty women rolled up and down, and cavalcades of prancing riders covered modest pedestrians with clouds of dust. This

Boulevard was the Parisian promenade *par excellence*, where all that was then pre-eminent in fashion and pleasure-seeking agreed to meet, at the moment when fanciful dandyism *à la Brummell* was in its glory, and when Bohemianism, too, was in its prime. And, be it remarked, the Bohemianism of those days, with its passion for artistic glory, and philosophic indifference to fashion, its bold originality, and open rebellion against any dictatorship either in letters or in dress, may fairly be said to have been the true preserver of the integrity and independence of the arts.

1832

The winter season in Paris was as gay as the summer months. In every direction entertaining went on, and of a character so refined and charming, that party-giving became a real enjoyment, and the stiffness even of official ceremonies and receptions disappeared. The houses of the nobility, and of the upper middle class, were filled with guests, and the Court balls were patterns of refined and sumptuous luxury. Lovely women and magnificent jewels all shone together in the galaxies of notabilities who crowded the great rooms in the Tuileries. The suppers with which these entertainments closed, were a wonderful sight. Round the huge tables, laden with gold plate and magnificent glass, and delicate fare, there shone a glittering ring of exquisite jewel-bedecked forms. So beautiful was the *coup d'œil*, that many gentlemen used to seat themselves in the boxes of the *salle de spectacle*, in which supper was laid, to enjoy it at their ease. Thence they were able to admire the fair necks and shoulders, and white arms, the many coloured gowns, the gauzes and laces which set off many a snowy bust, and to realise the injustice of Lord Byron's assertion that no lover should see his mistress eat or drink.

1835

After the ladies had finished their repast, the gentlemen supped, then dancing began again, and the guests departed gradually, before the dawn flooded the Place du Carrousel with light. A constant entertainer was Mme. d'Apony, who gave magnificent parties, and did the honours of them with matchless grace. She delighted in promoting the enjoyment of others, and earned the gratitude, as well as the respectful homage, of all lovers of social

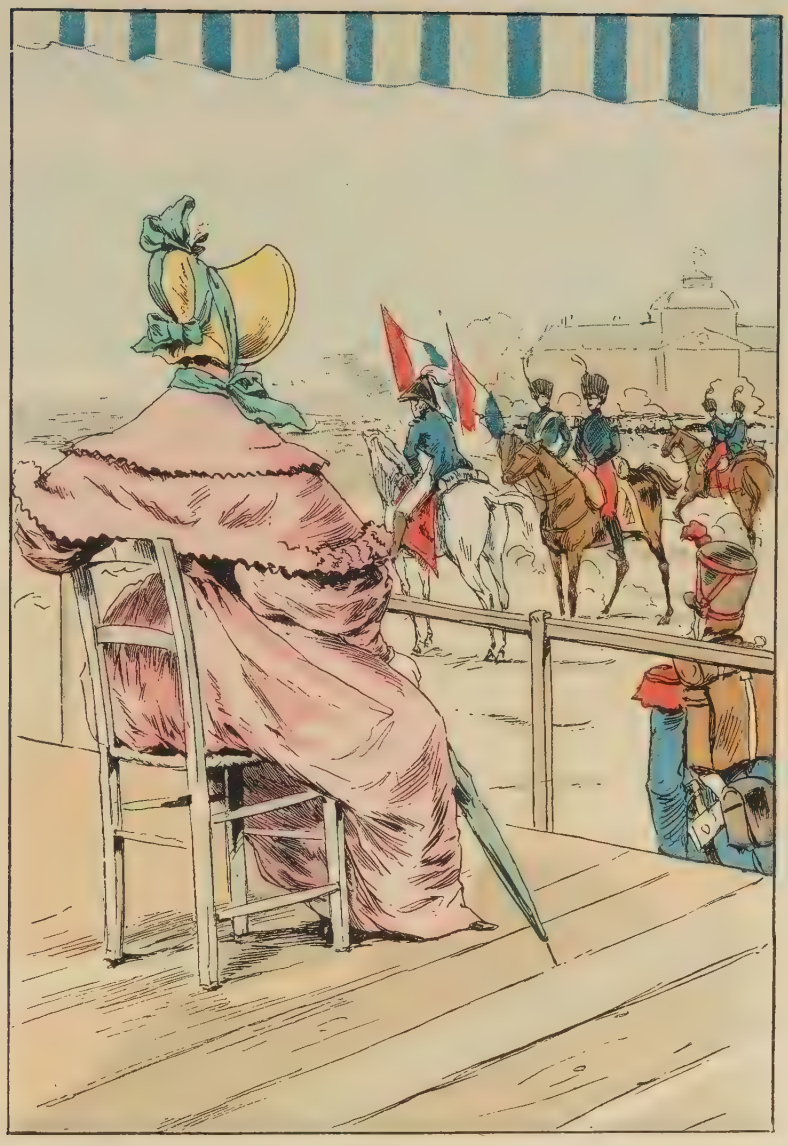
intercourse. The young Duc d'Orléans, with his boyish charm and polished ways, and his gentle deference towards all women, was a never-failing guest at every ball she gave. The best people, both of the fashionable and of the literary world, frequented Mme. d'Apony's house, in the princely apartments of which, Lamartine, Alfred de Musset, Eugène Sue, and Balzac often met, amidst a scene that blazed with diamonds, gems, and ropes of pearl, adorning white necks and rounded arms, and robes of the richest and most varied hues.

Dancing-parties and balls were also given by the Duchesses Decazes, de Raguse, de Liancourt, de Maillé, d'Albuféra, de Guise, d'Otrante, and de Noailles, by Mmes. de Flahaut, de Massa, and de Matry, by the Princesses de Léon, and de Beauffremont, and by the Comtesses de Lariboisière and de Châtenay. These entertainments followed thick upon each other; all over the city, from one end to the other, feasting and merrymaking went on. Scarce an hour out of the twenty-four but had its gay appointment. All night lights flared, carriages rolled, and orchestras scraped merry tunes. A possible dearth of fiddlers was the only dread that seemed to cross the revellers' brains.

1835

In carnival time, the flower of Parisian society betook itself to the Opera, and established itself in that splendid building, with its sixty crystal chandeliers, each glistening in the radiance of its burden of wax lights. It was a fairy scene, full of gay hues and whimsical effects. The boxes and galleries were hung with draperies and gauze, and gold and silver decorations and mirrors covered every vacant wall space.

Spanish dancers performed their national *boleros* and *zapateados* with a combined agility and airy delicacy which delighted all beholders; the graceful dances from "Cendrillon" were given by the ladies of the regular Opera ballet, and then began the famous quadrille of French costumes, from the time of Francis the First, down to the actual date. This reproduction of every costume worn for three centuries past was a sight worth seeing. The fashions of 1833, we are told, quite held their own with those of King Francis's days, to which they bore more than a slight resemblance. But the living panorama of bygone glories passed



A REVIEW ON THE SQUARE OF THE INVALIDES
(1835).

AT THE OPERA BALL

(*1835*).

out of sight at last ; dancing grew general, stage-performers and audience mingled, and, in that confused medley, intrigue and mysterious whisperings ran their riotous course, till day began to break upon the motley scene.

1836

At these Opera balls, masculine attire was generally of the simplest. Almost all men appeared in black evening dress, and most of them wore black or brown silk stockings. A few, who had adopted the fashion of tight-fitting pantaloons, showed square gold buckles on their shoes. The great majority of the ladies wore dominos, white, blue, pink, and, more especially, black. Many of the lady-spectators in the boxes wore no hoods at all. These had their hair dressed with feathers, and wreaths of artificial flowers and leaves, and wore masks with broad bands of tulle, plain or embroidered. A few eccentric individuals wore, instead of the domino, a kind of open robe, of brocade or flowered satin.

The old French style of dancing had been gradually revolutionised by the young students who frequented such places as the Grande Chaumière. The measured and graceful movements of the gavotte had been replaced by a series of wild and exaggerated steps, of the most frenzied and, occasionally, indecent description, to which the generic title of *chahut* was applied. From the Quartier Latin this barbarous and over-lively form of dancing spread through all the lower classes, and even reached the "dandies." It was to be seen in full force at the Opera, and at the balls at the Théâtre des Variétés, and its objectionable features are with us, we regret to say it, to this day.

1837

In the early days of Louis Philippe's reign, the Opera balls were patronised by the best society in Paris, and everything was conducted with the utmost decency and propriety. Foreigners were filled with admiration of the good taste evident at these gatherings, of the grace and good breeding of Parisian women, and were struck with astonishment at the essentially French feeling for equality which prevailed even in the confusion of such a huge assemblage. It was not till towards 1835 that the gaiety of these

Opera balls began to degenerate into licence. At that period an enormously wealthy Englishman, Lord Seymour, well known on the Boulevards for his mad pranks—he would scatter money and sugar-plums by handsful, and harangue the gaping crowd in the wildest, most insensate way—and who had earned himself the popular nickname of "Milord l'Arsouille," rushed like a whirlwind through the streets of Paris, bringing an avalanche of low dissipation and debauchery in his train. In 1836, satirical masquerades were regularly organised, with the deliberate object of bringing public ridicule upon Louis Philippe, his ministers and magistrates, and stirring up the evil instincts of the mob. All through the Carnival, Lord Seymour, who, dandy as he was, might well have measured strength with any market porter in the city, had his headquarters at the *Vendanges de Bourgogne*, and thence issued his commands to all his riotous battalions. The maskers, male and female, on whom he showered his money and his blows, plunged, at his bidding, into the wildest and coarsest merrymaking, orgies of food and wine, and dances indescribable.

1838

Then were seen the famous *Descentes de la Courtille*—hordes of disorderly maskers pouring through the town, *chicards*, *débardeurs*, merry-andrews and mountebanks, who harangued the crowd from the tops of their waggons, and turned the Boulevards into a close imitation of the Roman Corso, on the wildest days of an Italian carnival.

The longing for amusement, the desire to drown all sorrow, to ring every bell on Folly's skirt, was equally evident at all the open-air balls in and about Paris. Immediately after the cholera outbreak in 1832, (which took place on the very day of the *mi-carême*, and claimed numerous victims), the whole town went back to its pleasures, with a philosophy worthy of Anacreon himself, fiddles scraped and feet twinkled without a pause, at the Tivoli, which was still open, at the Ermitage, the Elysée Montmartre, the Montagnes Françaises, and the Grande Chaumière—that students' paradise, where every passion, political and sensual, had its home, the cradle, conscious or unconscious, of every coming revolution, in literature or in government.

Any one who gave himself the trouble, some fine summer evening, of climbing into the public conveyance (*coucou*) waiting on the Place de la Concorde, was soon transported to St. Cloud, where he was sure

A SENTIMENTAL WALK IN THE ABBEY OF LONGCHAMPS
(1836).

FASHIONS IN THE PALAIS-ROYAL GARDENS.

(1837).

to find a public ball in full swing, one which could worthily compete with any other, in or near the city.

"Nowhere"—thus Auguste Luchet, in the "Nouveau Tableau de Paris au 19e Siècle"—"nowhere could you behold more elegance or greater splendour. All the pretty women and smart men, belonging to the Court, the Embassies, and the country houses and villas scattered along this charming valley, made it a rule to meet there every evening, between nine and ten o'clock. The company was essentially blue-blooded. All its efforts to be civil and polite, to ruffle no feelings, and bring itself down to the level of all-comers, could not divest it of a certain touch of arrogance and pride. When the last public vehicle had returned to Paris, and the fear of losing caste, and dancing with impossible partners, no longer weighed it down, the noble and fashionable section put away its stiffness, and danced like any other mortals, on the earthen floor, under the chestnut branches, by the light of cheap red lamps, and to the strains of a trumpery tea-garden band.

One lady, whose sole claim to notoriety, in those days, was that of being the most attractive of her sex, the queen of all the merrymakings, the life and soul of the whole Court—one charming creature, the Duchesse de Berry, led the gay quadrilles. Her joyous presence and eager gaiety drove stiff etiquette to the winds, forced the severest diplomat to unbend, and moved the most formal Court officials to laughter. The obsequious crowd, following the royal lead, cast all its dignity away, and panted gaily in the wake of its merry mistress.

1838

The young citizen who, for the sake of being present at the close of these dances, risked the chance of finding no conveyance to take him back to Paris, was a great man when he reached home at last! Fine tales he had to tell, of unknown, but certainly aristocratic partners, not to mention the delight of conning the "Almanach Royal" and guessing at the names and addresses of the ladies who had honoured him!

We will not bestow more than a passing reference on the balls at Ranelagh, Auteuil, Bellevue, Sceaux, and that known as *La Tourelle*, in the Bois de Vincennes, at all of which young women and girls, grizzled men, smooth-faced youths, bearded bachelors, and citizens of every kind and description danced it furiously, from an instinctive desire for movement, or else—and this is

far more likely—because, like the proverbial sheep, they must e'en do as others about them did.

The day *par excellence*, the day of days, to every pretty woman, of every class, was that known as Longchamp, when the boulevards, from the Fontaine de l'Eléphant to the Porte Maillot, were blocked with a triple row of carriages, gay with feathers, flowers, and smiling faces, while up and down, between the vehicles, groups of cavaliers, all that was gayest and smartest in the gay capital, went capering to and fro. Longchamp was the day of Fashion's great review, when all her battalions were marshalled in array. It was the pet festival of the most elegant section of society, male and female, of all lovers of novelty, and of every idler in Paris. The smart folk went to Longchamp to show off their fine clothes and carriages and prancing horses; the rest went to criticise those more favoured by fortune than themselves, and to speak ill of their neighbours, a practice which has always been in fashion, and which may, or may not, be very salutary in Mid-Lent, or during Holy Week.

Longchamp was the chosen meeting-place of all the current vanities, of all the so-called celebrities and notabilities of the moment. In the middle of the road rolled gorgeous carriages and fours, in which were seated opulent members of the old or new nobility, nobodies puffed up with their own wealth, magistrates equally puffed up with pride in their position, courtiers intoxicated with their fleeting honours, and dashing young officers, spruce and elegant, in their close-fitting uniforms.

1839

On each side of this central procession advanced, in slow array, a line of chaises, closed *coupés*, landaus, and *berlines*. Some of these vehicles bore bevies of young women, pretty, every one of them, elaborately dressed, greedy of admiration, giddy with praise, and scarce vouchsafing a glance to the crowd of pedestrians who gazed at them with astonished eyes. Others were filled with happy family-parties—husband and wife and lovely, laughing children. Then, in tilburies, in stanhopes, and in tandems, came the dandies and men of fashion, glass in eye, camellias in their buttonholes. Here and there some happy and triumphant swain might be

IN THE LUXEMBOURG GARDENS.

(1838).

THE COURTYARD OF THE "MESSAGERIES NATIONALES" DILIGENCES
(*1839*).

seen driving a fair friend, whom he had persuaded to adventure herself in his fragile and dangerous-looking carriage. In and out, between the lines of vehicles, groups of riders flew past at full canter, wrapped in a light cloud of dust, through which gleamed, here and there, a corner of brown or red cloth, a glistening spur, or the gold top of a dainty riding switch.

1840

The spectators, sitting modestly on the pathway beside the road, watched all these celebrities, these many ambitions, this luxury and ostentation, defile in gay procession. Often, some voice in the crowd, sitting there in judgment, was heard relating, in unvarnished terms, the origin of some one of the huge and sudden fortunes, whose possessor was just passing by. And the recital left such honest folk as heard it well content to remain mere spectators of the strange human masquerade, where splendour and shame, pride, envy and malice, meanness and treachery, elbowed each other in the mud and dust of the arena.

Behind the rows of chairs the crowd spread wide, chattering, staring, coming and going. There might be seen the tailors and the dressmakers, the milliners and embroiderers, the bootmakers, and all the ladies' maids—every one come out, in his or her best clothes, to note the effect of the coats and gowns, the fal-lals and the shoes, constructed by their skilful fingers.

A few hackney coaches, seeming half-ashamed of their own presence, moved through the merry, eager crowd, quick to applaud or ridicule, which, as it passed them by, paid its respects to the façade of the Madeleine, and the Obelisk of Luxor, then just set up in Paris.

1839

For three whole days Longchamp filled all thoughts. The pilgrimage to the ancient abbey, which had given the outing its popular name, was a thing of the past indeed, but rich and poor alike crowded to the Bois, whence the stream of carriages slowly returned into the town. A prominent place was always occupied by M. Aguado's green many-coroneted coach, with its chased silver mounts and glass panels—a sort of shrine, quite worthy of a place in a religious procession. M. Schickler's carriages also attracted much

attention. One was a barouche, drawn by four splendid bays, with postillions in gold-embroidered jackets; the other a magnificent *berline*, with servants in white state-liveries. Even Justine's dainty rose and silver chariot, as described in Louvet's "Faublas," appeared upon the scene. Only, instead of the Marquise de B——'s handmaiden, seated in her shell-shaped car, adorned with all the delicate colouring so dear to eighteenth-century taste, it was some fair young actress—the masses of glistening curls that clustered round her roguish face, and fell in fascinating confusion on her lovely neck, half-hidden beneath her wide-brimmed hat—who challenged the admiration of the connoisseur.

On every side the names of Victorine, Burty, Gagelin, Palmyre, Mme. St. Laurent, and Herbaut, the leading milliners and dressmakers of the day, resounded. And amongst the ladies there was talk of challis-cashmeres, and Hindustan crépons, Mogul cambrics, and Golconda muslins, Memphis gauze, and Chinese agate, Sandomir stuffs, Lyons foulards, and Thibet woollens—for Fashion had its own geography, and even its oriental scholars. The prettiest spring fashions and the latest materials, the best styles and the heights of the extremest elegance, were all talked over and discussed. Longchamp was the great fancy fair, whither every fair Parisian betook herself, to draw inspiration for her new gowns, and dream of their perfections. Little by little, after 1835, Longchamp, while improving in the moral sense, fell from its former glory. The purple robe was exchanged for the many-coloured garment of society. Fashions and ranks alike fell into a confused medley. The pretty *bourgeoise*, in her tarlatan gown, elbowed the great lady in her sumptuous satins and embroideries, and half the women came *incognito* and disguised in the quietest attire, to spy on what the other half was doing. The splendour and special colour of the show soon died away, and in the end, those who took part in it felt free to appear in dresses neither excessively elegant nor altogether new. Longchamp was finally eclipsed by the great race-days.

It may fairly be claimed for the dainty queens of the Romantic period, who took the places of the opulent beauties of the Empire, that they were full of delicacy and refinement, that they had an exquisite sense of taste, instinct for dress, and care of their own persons; they are in closer sympathy with our latter-day feelings and anxieties, our strained nerves and brains, our psychology, in short, than the *Lionnes* of 1840, the hyperdistinguished dreamers of 1850, or the *cocodettes* of the Second Empire.

CHAPTER VI

FASHION AND FASHION'S VOTARIES, FROM 1840 TO 1850

AMONG the frequenters of the Hotel de Rambouillet, in its palmiest days, certain tawny-haired and uncompromising ladies, who, like Mlle. Paulet, carried their refinements of expression and sentiment to such a point as to make speech a weariness, were given the title of *Lionnes*. After the year 1840, the word *Lionne* was used to describe the lady of fashion in her most extreme development—the creature of restlessness and excitability—the lover's idol, supple, untamed, passionate, fond—the fascinating creature of swift movements and exquisite pallor, described by the poet De Musset.

Le Lion had for some time been the term applied, both in the city and in literature, to the masculine leaders of fashion. Frédéric Soulié had published "Le Lion Amoureux," and Charles de Bernard "La Peau du Lion." There was a mania for the employment of zoological terms. A dandy would call his mistress *ma tigresse*, if she was a well-born woman, and *mon rat*, if she was a dancer. His groom was *mon tigre*—and such conviction was there in his manner of using these names, that it left its mark on those servile reflectors of

current habits, the novels of the day. One tale written at that date opens with the words: "*Le lion avait envoyé son tigre chez son rat.*"

1840

"A Physiological History of the Lion," by Félix Deriège, with illustrations by Gavarni and Daumier, met with great success.

The *Lionne* was of various species. There was the fashionable *Lionne*, the political *Lionne*, and the literary *Lionne*. All of them had sprung from the same parentage. Alfred de Musset was the real godfather, and George Sand the true godmother, of this strange line of amazons, whose audacity and eccentricity knew no restraint.

The poet's famous song, "Avez vous vu dans Barcelone," &c. had given a generic title to the swarm of unruly, untamed, eager creatures which had sprung up under the reaction of the Romantic period, and such of the great novelists' works as "Valentine," "Indiana," and "Lelia," had filled the souls of the self-styled victims of the tender passion with dreams of just claims to manly independence, which, alas! were to cost their lovely professors no small part of their feminine charm.

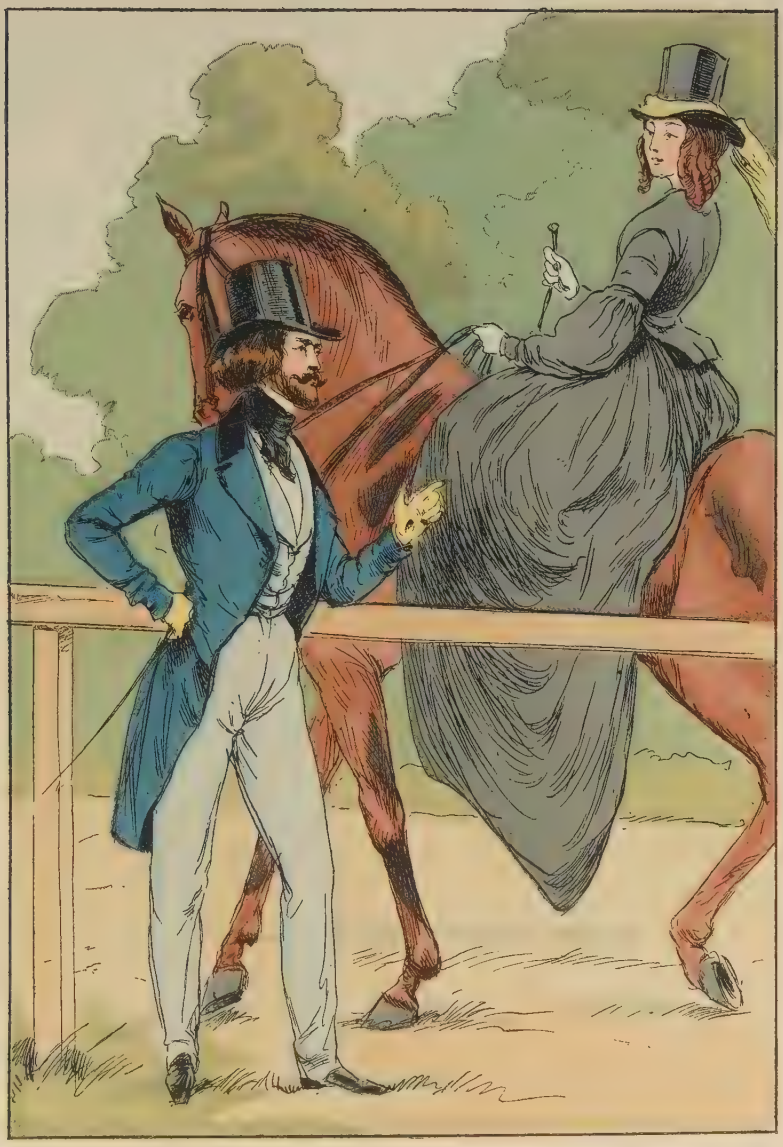
The *Lionne* then, was the natural forerunner of the *Vésuvienne*, to whom, a few years later, so strange a part was allotted in the *République des femmes*.

The woman of the 1830 period had been sensitive and sentimental beyond all measure. Her imagination, fed by Walter Scott's novels and Byron's poetry, was ablaze with ideas of self-sacrifice and devotion, of patient suffering and infinite tenderness. She revelled in the gloomiest fiction, and her sole idea of beauty and attraction was to look pale, worn by silent suffering, transparent, intangible, if that were possible. Bent like a reed before the breath of love, she accepted the fate that left her misunderstood and unappreciated. But no thought of revolt occurred to her. She withered gently, like a flower crushed on its stem, scarce venturing to hope the dew of happiness might fall on her once more. She spent long hours in causeless languor and half-torpid reverie, a state, to her conception, of perfect blessedness.

The *Lionne* personified the reaction against this sickly state of mind. Like her wild prototype, she roared and bounded, and plunged into the fray of Paris life, shaking her mane, breasting the breeze,

A FOP DRIVING IN THE BOIS DE BOULOGNE

(*1840*).



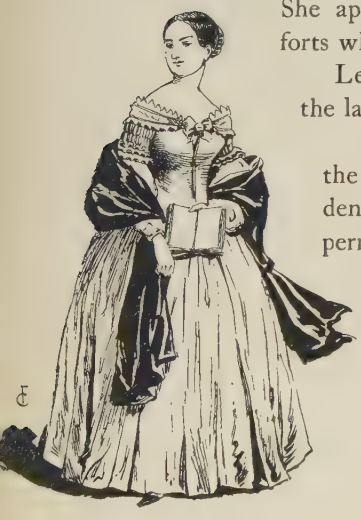
HIGH-LIFE IN THE BOIS DE BOULOGNE

L'allée des Cavaliers (*1842*).

strong in the consciousness of her power, the free play of her muscles, and the sharpness of her claws. She could ride like an arab, drain goblets of steaming punch, or iced champagne, wield a cane, fence, shoot with pistols, smoke a cigar without turning giddy, and handle an oar with ease, if that necessity arose. She was the spoilt-child of Fashion, and whenever Fashion's trumpet called her followers to the saddle, the *Lionne* was to the fore, dashing, alert, intrepid, firm in her stirrups.

1840

Although she claimed her share in every kind of power, she confined her actual exercise of freedom to the various departments of fashionable existence. She was a true woman on occasion, and was always ready to play that part for those who won her favour. She combined sport, the turf, pleasure and elegance, with marvellous facility, and read her *Journal des Haras*, her *Journal des Chasseurs*, and her *Petit Courrier des Dames* with equal impartiality. She appreciated all the luxury, the refinement, and the comforts which make home homelike.



1841

Let us call on Eugène Guinot to guide our steps into the lair of some fair *Lionne* of his day.

"We find ourselves in a small newly built hotel, at the far end of the Chaussée d'Antin. A delightful residence, indeed! Observe the elegant design of the perron, the noble lines of the peristyle, the exquisite flowers, the beauty of the exotic shrubs, the antique grace of the statues! Never did lioness dwell in lovelier cage! But we must hurry onwards. The mistress of the dwelling is just awake, and summons her maid to attend her morning toilet. Her rooms are worth description. They are four in number, decorated in a style borrowed from the middle ages. The bedroom, hung with blue damask, contains a canopied bed, a *prie-dieu*, six armchairs, and two splendid chests, all in magnificent carved ebony. The room is further adorned with Venetian mirrors, a chandelier and candelabra in

gilt bronze, silver cups and vases, chased with infinite art, and two pictures—a *Judith*, by Paul Veronese, and a *Diana*, by Andrea del Sarto. The drawing-room is crammed with ornaments, paintings, and furniture of every kind. It looks like a splendid bric-à-brac shop. One specially striking feature is the quantity of arms—swords, lances, daggers, gauntlets, helmets, morions, coats of mail, a whole warlike panoply, sufficient to equip a dozen warriors—disposed upon the walls. The boudoir and bathroom are in the same style, gothic, martial and severe. Nothing can be more whimsical and quaint than to see all a pretty woman's paraphernalia strewn about amidst these warlike engines and frowning relics of a bygone time. A lace scarf hangs upon a lance head. A dainty pink satin bonnet swings from a rapier hilt, a sunshade is cast into the hollow of a shield, and tiny shoes stand just below the cuisses once worn by some mighty captain of freebooters."

1841

The *Lionne* was not nearly so archaic in her dress as in the decoration of her apartments. The fair *romantique* of 1830 would have moved amidst the Gothic splendour of her rooms, robed in the trailing garments of a Marguerite de Bourgogne, or decked out in all the bravery of a châtelaine of the middle ages. She would even, at a pinch, have donned the iron girdle, and bracelets of steel. But the fashionable dame of the year 1840 was more individual in her taste, though less faithful, we must add, to local colour.

1842

When she rose in the morning, she covered her head with a cambric cap with narrow lappets, edged with a waving frill of Valenciennes. She wrapped herself in a cashmere dressing-gown, of some pale tint, high at the neck, and gathered fanshape at the back of the waist. This garment was fastened from chin to toe with little frogs, and the wide Venetian sleeves fell back over the arms. Beneath it peeped out a close-plaited

THE BOOTHS ON THE PONT-NEUF

(*1844*).

OPPOSITE THE FIRST CAFÉ DE PARIS

Boulevard des Italiens (1845).

chemise amazone, with plain collar and falling frill. Her feet were thrust into heel-less slippers known as *nonchalantes*, embroidered with gay-hued braids.

1842

Thus dressed, she gave audience to her servants, grooms, footmen, saddler, dressmakers, and milliners. She went into every matter as thoroughly as any member of the sterner sex, inquiring about her horses, looking through her armourer's and her tailor's bills, as well as those of her milliner and shoemaker, settling tradesmen's accounts, saying a word to her florist, and retiring finally to her boudoir, to change her dress, and make herself ready to receive her expected female visitors.

This time, her cap was very small indeed ; a cloud of lace, falling butterfly-shape upon each cheek, with loops of ribbon set between. Caps were then universally worn ; they were of every shape and size, adapted to every style of dress, and every possible occasion. The dressing-gown was replaced by an open wrapper, made of a new kind of foulard, as remarkable for the strength and softness of its texture as for the brilliancy of its colouring. The back was gathered, and it was plaited at the shoulders and waist, where the belt was fastened with a golden buckle. Below this appeared a petticoat of ribbed pekin, with three scalloped flounces, and the fair lady's hands were concealed by laced and watered-silk mittens.

1842

The *Lionne* welcomed her lady friends to breakfast, while the husbands of the party took their midday repast at the Café de Paris. The meal was solid and hearty, for the ladies had sharp-set appetites. Oysters, truffled fowls, and sweet dishes, disappeared as if by magic. It was a point of honour to live up to the name they bore, to eat like lionesses, and lay up strength and energy to carry them through the labours of the day. Their claws were not idle, either, and more than one of their fellow creatures suffered in such conversations as those reported by the physiologist Guinot. "What is the news?" "Little enough. This is a dead season for scandal, as you know!" "Have you read Balzac's last novel?" "I never read a novel!" "Nor I!" "Nor I!" "Nor I!" "So the Vicomte de L——

has sold his grey horse!" "No; he lost it at cards, and it is the luckiest thing that has happened to him since he began to play!" "Lucky! to lose a horse that had cost him ten thousand francs?" "Ten thousand francs, my dear; suppose you say something over a hundred thousand! and that is where his luck comes in. He had the most excessive and obstinate faith in that horse's powers. He was perpetually backing it for enormous sums; the beast was always beaten, and yet none of its failures ever altered his opinion of it, and his infatuation certainly cost him four or five thousand louis in less than a year." "I shouldn't have thought he was rich enough to bear so great a loss." "Did you hear Marco last night? he sang like an angel!" "And have you seen the new ballet?" "It would be perfect if we had men dancers—for good men dancers are indispensable for a ballet, whatever those Jockey Club gentlemen may say to the contrary. Of course *they* only care to see women in the ballet!"

1842

"Has Mme. B. shown herself yet?" "No; she's still inconsolable. She would like to go back to the times when all forsaken ladies went to the Carmelites to bemoan themselves. But there are no convents for that sort of thing nowadays—more's the pity, for nothing is so inconvenient as having to carry about a grievance of that kind in one's own house." "Why doesn't she do like Mme. d'A., who never mourns any lover for more than three days? Custom brings consolation in its train!" "Talking of Mme. d'A., I hear little Roland is quite ruined." "What is he going to do?" "He is going to be a horse-jobber." "That's a pity! He was a first-rate steeplechase rider." "Didn't he have a horse killed under him?" "Oh, yes! that was Captain Kernok's Mustapha; the horse died of apoplexy in a steeplechase." "How's your husband, my dear? Shall we see him to-day?" "I haven't an idea. I haven't seen him myself for four and twenty hours, and I thought it better not to disturb him by going to his rooms. He is my best friend, Armand, a most charming fellow, and I am quite devoted to him, and would not vex him for the world; but, after all,

1843

you know, I am his wife, and we must each keep our own liberty of action." "Yes, my dear soul, you are perfectly right. Your sentiments are quite irreproachable, and so are your breakfasts! What shall we do now?" "Shall we go and shoot pigeons at Tivoli, and then go on to the Bois? You know there is a private match to-day between Mariette and Leporello!" "Yes; let us go. Our horses will wait for us at the Auteuil Gate, and we can drive up there to meet them."

1843

Thus ran the talk round the well-spread board, an insipid aimless chatter, almost exclusively on sporting subjects. Not a passing reference, even, to literature or art. The *Lionne* of this particular category does not seem to have been aware of the fact that Victor Hugo had just entered the Academy, that Alfred de Musset was publishing his poems, that Lamartine had plunged into politics, that Alphonse Karr was breeding a swarm of sharp-stinged literary wasps,* that Mérimée, Gozlan, Théophile Gautier, Henri Heine, Alexandre Dumas, and Soulié were writing masterpieces of vigorous wit and literary style. Her acquaintance with Eugène Sue was limited to the pocket-handkerchiefs named after the heroine of his "Mystères de Paris," "Fleur de Marie." Her whole discourse was of racing and anglomania. She might, as a matter of social duty, make some remark about Rachel's dramatic talent, but she would most probably hint that, for her part, she held Lola Montès—the eccentric adventuress and circus-rider whose name was ringing through the whole of Europe, and more especially in Vienna, Berlin, and Munich—the greater genius of the two.

1843

While her lady friends smoke their cigarettes, the hostess slips on her riding habit, of a shade called "London smoke," fastened with frogs and hanging buttons, and cut open in front, to show her frilled cambric chemisette. The roomy sleeves come halfway below the elbow and are finished with very deep cuffs, covered by yellow leather gauntlets which fall over the wrist, without entirely concealing it. Under her habit she wears riding trousers, strapped over neat little boots with silver spurs,

* He published a satirical paper, called *La Guèpe*.

and on her head she sets a wide beaver hat, rather like an archbishop's *in* shape, and kept in place by means of a silken chin-strap.

1843

Our *Lionne* and her friends reach Tivoli at last. She steps out of her clarence, or her American phaeton, gathers her riding skirt over her arm, and stalks into the pigeon-shooting enclosure, to join a bevy of dandies and sportsmen, with some of whom she shakes hands, English fashion, in the heartiest and most cordial way, greeting others with a masculine nod and "Good-day." She sends for a gun, sights it skilfully, and (her *tiger* standing near her meanwhile, to hand her second weapon), pulls down a good twenty birds in thirty shots. Proud of her shooting, and delighted with the murmur of admiration that greets her exploit, she returns to her carriage, and, at the entrance to the Bois, the ladies mount spirited horses, spur them to a canter, and soon, sitting straight and square in their saddles, they reach the racecourse, where betting at once begins, and learned discussions are held on the training and performances of the favourites, Mariette and Leporello.

1845

1846

Before the last race is run, our heroine, content to have put in an appearance, canters back to Paris and hurries to a fencing-match, where she acquits herself right bravely, and wins applause by the quickness and steadiness of her play. Or else she betakes herself to some swimming bath, takes headers from the highest spring-board, and shows her skill in strokes of every kind, and all the graceful feats dear to the swimmer's heart.

But there is more before her yet. She comes home, and rests a moment in her boudoir, while her maid lays out her evening gown of some oriental stuff, with sleeves *à la bédouine* or *à la persane*. She has her hair arranged in waved

PASSENGERS BY THE CORBEIL STEAMBOAT

(*1846*).

THE TERRACE AT TORTONI'S

(*1847*).

bandeaux, that hide her ears and fall in coquettish curls upon her neck, and further adorns it with a Greek cap, or lace lappets fastened with an artificial rose.

1847

Dinner, in the house of a smart "sportswoman," is generally sumptuously served and splendidly arranged. The guests are numerous and conversation generally turns on horses, sweepstakes, and the boxing-ring. The *Lionne* is quite able to keep pace with the *Lion*, and consumes her full share of wine and liqueurs. She knows everything that is going on in the fashionable world. She talks over and criticises every beauty who attracted attention at the last official ball, she goes into raptures over the music at the Duc d'Orléan's last concert. She showers expressions of admiration on Virginie Déjazet and Fanny Elssler. The gentlemen applaud — their looks, their words, their smiles, all bear witness to their opinion of her. They think her divine, delightful, bewitching, *pyramidale*, *colossale!* The parties at the English Embassy, Count d'Orsay, Mme. d'Apony's beautiful balls, the entertainments given by Ministers, the Polish *fête* at the Hôtel Lambert, and the Princess Czartoryska, the magnificent receptions of M. de Rambuteau and the Comtesse Merlin, all come under discussion; and at dessert a great deal is said about the lovely Mme. Pradier and her charming dancing-parties, to which, according to the ladies, all the literary and artistic celebrities in Paris are proud to be invited.

1847

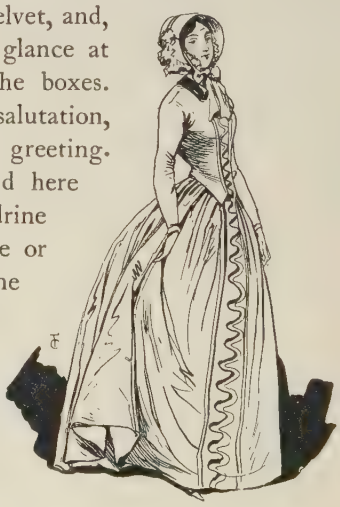
1847

When coffee is served, the whole party moves into a small apartment filled with low, comfortable, inviting, softly-stuffed chairs. The *Lionne* has borrowed the English ideas of comfort, and applied them to everything about her—furniture, household arrangements, and dress. Her smoking-room contains none of those great sofas ranged round the walls, on which the fair ladies of the Restoration were wont to seat themselves

in prim rows, like schoolgirls who would fain change their places if they dared.

1848

This chamber is furnished with seats for two persons only, *vis-à-vis*, settees, and luxurious cushions, triumphs of needlework, which the guests begin by admiring, and upon which they end by leaning. There are thick carpets and splendid *portières*, which show off the Gothic furniture. Coffee is served in delicate china cups of English manufacture; life seems to run more smoothly, and the ball of after-dinner talk to roll more pleasantly than ever, between those deep divans, and amid the clouds of delicate perfumes that rise from the gilded tripods disposed about the room. But not even the luxurious surroundings and exquisite comfort we have described will keep the *Lionne* in her cage. She carries off her party to her Opera box, to hear an act or two of the "Comte Ory." Every opera-glass is turned upon her as she enters. A wave of excitement passes over the stalls. Our fashionable lady has created a sensation. She lays her jewelled fan, and bouquet of camellias from Constantin's, her gold-mounted opera-glasses and dainty *bonbonnière*, on the ledge of her box. She seats herself in a rustle of silk and velvet, and, leaning back at her ease, she begins, without a glance at the stage, to look round the house and scan the boxes. Now and again she bestows some little sign or salutation, some dainty wave of her hand, or pretty smile of greeting. She takes delight in studying all the gowns, and here and there applauds the handiwork of Alexandrine or Mme. Séguin, the excellent taste of Brousse or of Palmyre, the skill of Mme. Dasse, or the English style of Mlle. Lenormand. She notices many members of the world of fashion, such as Lord and Lady Granville, the Princesse de Beauffremont, Mme. Duchâtel and Mme. Rambuteau, the Princess Clémentine, Mme. de Plaisance, Mme. Lehon, Mme. Aguado, Mme. Le Marrois, the Comtesse d'Osmont, and so forth. Little she recks that Damoreau, Duprez, or Roger are on the stage. The diamonds, and their wearers in every box, are the sight she has come to see. Her whole mind is absorbed



1848

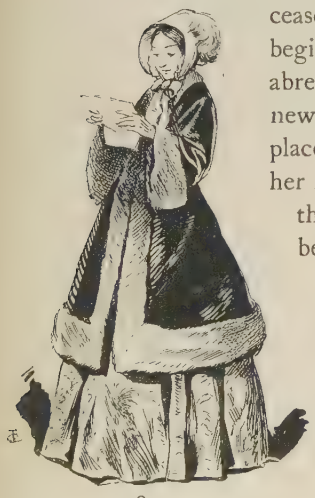
THE CARREFOUR GAILLON AND THE FOUNTAIN
(*1848*).

A STAND AT THE CHAMP DE MARS RACES
(*1848*).

in watching the parties in certain boxes. She strives to guess what intrigues may be going on, to find confirmation of current gossip, and invent new tales concerning other folk's love affairs. Now and then she will lean back in the box, and ask one of her lady friends, "Do you know who that is with Mme. de X.?" "What! do you mean to say Mme. de X. is still carrying on with little Rubempré?" or else, "Oh, my dear creature! this really is beyond all bounds! Do look at that old Marquise de C. making the most ridiculous eyes at that boy! She doesn't even wait till they are grown up!"

1848

But our fair lady will not tarry long at the Opera. She has to finish up her evening at a dance or a select tea-party, in the Faubourg St. Germain or the Chaussée d'Antin. She will lose a few louis at cards, eat an excellent supper, get back to her own house about two o'clock in the morning, and step into her bed, without having spared one hour, since she left it, to thought, or reverie, or affection. All her days are alike, each morning the same routine of ceaseless activity and movement, and physical over-exertion begins afresh. Her thoughts are all centred on keeping abreast of the correct fashion of the day, and inventing new ones. Her husband and children hold a far smaller place in her life than do her horses and her dogs. As for her heart, so regular and steady is it in all its movements, that no dandy or *Lion* on the earth will ever make it beat the faster or the slower. Love, in fact, during this 1840 period, is only to be found in the student's Bohemia, and among the populace. We read of it in Murger's thrilling pages, and in Paul de Kock's delightful descriptions of country idylls. But the fashionable classes would have none of it.



1849

In conclusion, it may be said that the smart society of 1840 had adopted a sort of *cant*, what is now known in Paris as *snobisme*, which was nothing more than an exaggerated parody of a certain class of English habits, rendered all the more objectionable by its utter artificiality. Mimicry does not argue similarity. Any one, as Carlyle and Barbey d'Aurévilly have both told us, can adopt a certain air or attitude, just as he may steal

the pattern of a garment. But nothing is so wearisome as the perpetual playing of a part, nothing more cruelly exhausting than the eternal wearing of a mask. The *Lions* and *Lionnes* were but a feeble reflection of British dandyism. They laid themselves open to caricature, and Gavarni has enshrined their absurdities in some of the cleverest figures in his wonderful human puppet-show. "*To seem, or not to be*," was the motto of these lackeys of fashion.

But it is no part of our plan to enlarge on the philosophical aspect of what was certainly a very picturesque page in the social history of Paris.

CHAPTER VII

FASHION'S PANORAMA IN 1850

THE *TAPAGEUSES* AND THE *MYSTÉRIEUSES*

LIONNES were seen no more, after the stormy epoch of 1848 swept away the last of that wayward race. The palmy days of sport were over. The racecourse was forsaken, Chantilly was almost a desert, and the place of the faithful frequenters of the Croix de Berny knew them no more.

In the Republic of Fashion (the word Empire was momentarily out of favour) two schools, described by Mme. de Girardin in her "Vicomte de Launay," struggled for supremacy. The first, the "showy" school (*l'école Tapageuse*), strove to attract attention, and dazzle all who looked. The second, the "mysterious" school (*l'école Mystérieuse*), sought rather to captivate admiration by rousing curiosity.

The *tapageuses*, as the ladies of the first section were called, were easily recognised by their audacious style of dress, and somewhat bold demeanour. They wore their feathers in upright waving plumes, and their diamonds set in coronets. The *mystérieuses* cultivated an air of dignified reserve. Their feathers drooped like weeping willows, and their diamonds only sparkled in combs, half-hidden between two braids of hair, or in long chains that fell between the folds of their wearers' garments. The *tapageuse* made the frankest, most uncom-

promising bid for notice. The *mystérieuse* seemed to seek the shade, for the sake of being followed into it by her admirers. In the first case, the part was easy enough to play. The *tapageuse* had to hit on extraordinary fashions, which nobody else would wear. In the second, matters were far less simple, and required far greater tact. The *mystérieuse* had to wear what no one else had ventured to put on, and yet to appear as simply dressed as the generality of her sex.

1850

Some few dressmakers contrived to satisfy both sections, and obtain the patronage of the rival parties.

In these establishments, the ladies of the "mysterious" school found the dainty and becoming garments best suited to their purpose—a little black velvet cloak, perhaps, with an unpretentious trimming. But the velvet was of the richest, the trimming, modest as it looked, of the finest workmanship, and the cut of the little garment perfect, stamping it the production of a masterhand. The advantage of this exquisite simplicity was its appropriateness to every occasion. In such a cloak, a woman might visit the richest and the poorest, as she pleased. This elegant hypocrisy, and dissimulated splendour, could shock none but the envious-hearted connoisseur. The garment was the ideal covering for the heroine of a novel. It put on no airs of deliberate disguise, and yet diffused a certain delicate aroma of distinction and *incognito*.

1850

The same dressmaker was ready to supply the *tapageuse* with garments eminently fitted for her requirements. The cloak was no larger perhaps, but it was trimmed with some sixty or seventy yards of lace, and was the very thing to wear on gala-days, when every stitch of Fashion's canvas is set to catch the admiring breeze.

The *mystérieuses*, so Delphine Gay assures us, claimed to be artistic in taste, and dressed themselves after famous pictures. "Thus," writes the witty authoress of the "Lettres Parisiennes," "the simple and severely beautiful coiffure which roused so much admiration at the last diplomatic reception, the charming red velvet hat, with its plumes of white feathers, worn by the British ambassadress, were copied from one of Rubens' portraits. All the world was talking, too, of Mme. de M.'s becoming

THE CHINESE BATHS.

On the Boulevard des Capucines (1849).

AT THE FRÈRES PROVENÇAUX RESTAURANT

(*1850*).

headdress; a delicate veil lightly draped over the top of her head. 'How lovely!' 'How novel!' 'What exquisite taste!' cried every one. Novel, indeed! It was an exact copy of the veil in the *Vierge aux raisins*, only a rain of gold and silver spangles had turned the head-covering of the sacred figure into a worldly vanity! And look, again, at Mme. de V——'s dainty white tulle cap, with a black lace kerchief cast coquettishly over it, and knotted under the chin. That is not copied from a Raphael, but it was surely inspired by Chardin, Lancret, Watteau, or some one of the famous painters of the merry Regent's days; unless, indeed—and that would make it still more classically correct—it was modelled after some lovely china shepherdess!"

1851

The fine ladies of the more lively school of dress patronised a certain set of dressmakers, who combined great knowledge with superior taste, and strong imagination. These ambitious artistes studied pictures with much attention, and drew frequent inspiration from tragic, dramatic, and melodramatic literature. They attended the first nights of all plays, and were seen at every picture exhibition. Their Turkish and Greek bodies, their Polish vests, their Chinese tunics, their Hungarian dolmans, their Russian riding-habits, were all founded on reliable information. And so successfully did they soften tints, so skilfully did they arrange their flowers and trimmings, that they contrived to fuse these foreign fashions into a most entrancing French one. Whimsical the effect often was, and even daring, but pretty and becoming it never failed to be. One of the dressmakers referred to made a wedding-dress for the Queen of Spain, embroidered with twelve crowns, to represent the twelve provinces of the Spains. Palmyre still lived on her old reputation, and many fashionable ladies openly expressed their admiration and respect for her artistic taste and style. Both *tapageuses* and *mystérieuses* studied in her school, but the arbiter of 1830 fashions no longer reigned supreme; a number of rival establishments, imitators of hers, had sprung up in Paris, and filled the fashion journals with their exploits, and their bids for custom. Mlle. Félicie, Mme. Baudrant, and Mme. Quillet were all considered successful and expert successors to the flourishing kingdom once ruled by Palmyre and Alexandrine.

1851

The Parisian society of 1850 was so immersed in the whirl of balls, receptions, and theatre-going, that no outsider could have believed that a revolution had just occurred, and radically changed the form of government. Balls and gay parties were the only subjects discussed. Balls given by the President of the Assembly, evening parties by the Prince-President of the Republic, balls at the Turkish Embassy, balls in great bankers' houses, balls in the Faubourg St. Germain, balls at the Hôtel de Ville, charity balls, not to mention the actresses' balls, which were considered the very pink of fashion, and which left the glories of aristocratic, political, financial and official entertaining quite in the shade. There was a perfect rage for attending these Bohemian festivities; there was nothing the smart men would not do to secure an invitation. So furious were the ladies of the great world at the leaning of a certain section of their masculine acquaintance towards theatrical society, that they actually proposed to form an association of hostesses, who undertook to forbid their houses to any gentleman who ventured to attend an actresses' ball, and a large number of the chief residents in the Faubourg St. Honoré and the Faubourg St. Germain, and in the Chaussée d'Antin, gave in their adhesion. But no steps were ever actually taken against the delinquents.

1852

Mme. Alice Ozy was the first lady of the profession who opened her house on a large scale. Her example was soon followed by Mme. Octave, of the Vaudeville, and Mlle. Fuoco, a well-known opera-dancer. The fashion soon spread from one theatre to another; Mme. Doche and Mme. Renaud, Mlle. Plunkett and Mlle. Cerrito were foremost in the merry whirl. The famous Atala Bilboquet gave a great entertainment, in Mid-Lent, at which every gentleman was expected to appear in knee-breeches and buckled shoes. This fancy very nearly drove trousers out of fashion. All the men in Paris, dandies, financiers, diplomats, artists, men of letters, were equally delighted to reappear in the nether garments which had suffered so long a period of disfavour.

1853

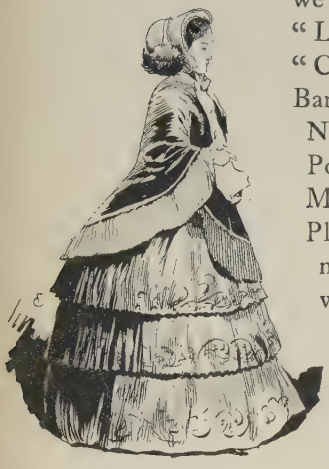
A BOX AT THE ITALIAN OPÉRA

(1852).

THE LAST OF THE BOULEVARD" LIONS"

(1853).

Never had the theatres been so filled, and with such fashionable audiences, as in this year of grace 1850. Among the plays produced we may mention Ponsard's "Charlotte Corday," Gozlan's "La Queue du Chien d'Alcibiade," Alfred de Musset's "Chandelier," "Les Amoureux sans le savoir," by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, "Les Contes de la Reine de Navarre," by Scribe and Legouvé, "Horace et Lydie," by Ponsard, again; "Le Carrosse du Saint-Sacrement," by Mérimée, and a score of others by Viennet, Monrose, Plouvier, &c. The Comédie Française, under the able management of Arsène Houssaye, shone with a splendour which has long since faded from men's memories.



1853

Fashion was again veering round, by degrees, to Italian opera, and all the smart ladies met to applaud Sontag, Colini, Gardoni, and other no less celebrated singers. Both opera and theatres, in fact, were prospering, and crammed with spectators eager to be regaled with dramatic and musical performances. No kind of conversation was so frequent; in social gatherings, as that which turned on actors and theatrical subjects. The least eloquent tongue found no difficulty in discoursing of the last new play, the reigning singer or dancer of the moment, and, after due attention had been bestowed upon the weather, drawing-room gossip was sure to veer in this direction. The Fiorentini in "Norma," Duprez in "William Tell," Samson and Geffroy in the "Nozze di Figaro," Mme. Allan and Bressant in the "Misanthrope," Frédérick Lemaître, Rose Chéri, Lesueur, Mélingue and Mme. Guyon, and even Paul Legrand, the clown and comic dancer, were all discussed in turn.

1853

The theatre had touched the gay world on its tenderest point—its vanity.

"Every drawing-room is a stage," quoth Auguste Villemot, in one of his witty articles, "every screen is a side-scene, every father-in-law a prompter. This sort of private performance delights many women. To begin with, home worries become less wearisome—that is a distinct gain. And then, private theatricals involve a world of contrivance and calculation, in which the heart and vanity of the actors are both called into play. There is the excite-

ment of rehearsals, protestations of affection, as dictated in the part, squeezing of hands, compliments on the performance, and all the rest, in every particular of which the fair amateur finds her advantage.

1854

And then, when the great day arrives at last, there are all the lovely fanciful gowns, and a part to be laughed through, if the player's teeth are good, or only smiled through if they are faulty. Beauty, in fact, on these occasions, executes every manœuvre that elegance and vanity can dictate.

"A very great lady has been mentioned to me, who is even more proud of her masses of golden hair than of her noble ancestry. Her one dream is to play the part of Eve. She goes about seeking for a Paradise Lost, either in prose or verse; she has begged every poet in Paris to provide her with such a piece. One young and celebrated writer has expressed his readiness to oblige her, on condition that he himself is allowed to play the Serpent. But that part, it would appear, is already cast. Meanwhile, the lovely lady plays any other she is offered, provided she can faint in it, for then her hair tumbles down quite naturally, and she is sure of scoring a sensation."

The Carnival breathed its last to the sound of scraping fiddles. But the moment Lent began, society seemed to quiet down, and the fair Parisians divided their time between their favourite preachers, and their worldly avocations. The pulpit orators waged war against the feminine extravagance and frivolity of the age. They hurled striking pictures, and bold metaphors from Holy Scripture, against the reigning fashions "swelling with wickedness." (Was this a reference to the budding crinoline, which was still graceful enough, and anything but an encumbrance?) Their charming hearers listened to this flood of eloquence with fervent attention, and the deepest compunction. They vowed they would mend their ways, and cut down

1854

A SMART CORNER OF THE RUE RICHELIEU

The East Indian Company's warehouse (1854).

THE BOULEVARD DES ITALIENS

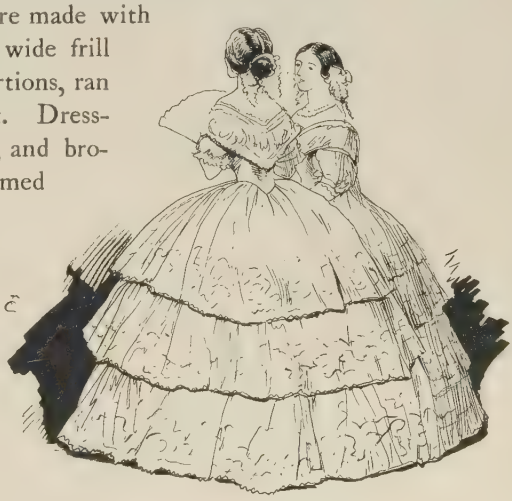
Left side (1855).

their expenditure on vanities, and dreamt of a life of modest simplicity, in simple cambrics or unpretending muslins. But, once Good Friday was over, the echo of the word Longchamp—though, indeed, nothing but a memory—woke all their inveterate passion for fashion, and luxury, and dress. Let us glance at the ruling whims and fancies of this particular moment, the exact meridian of the present century.

1856

The Revolution of 1848 had not brought about any marked change in the general costume. Nothing, at the very utmost, beyond an occasional tricolor ribbon on gown or bonnet, and a good many "Girondin cloaks" covered with three narrow shaded bands of muslin, with scalloped trimmings. The opening days of the Second Republic were marked by no special eccentricities in dress. Good taste leant towards simplicity, and the best-dressed women endeavoured to follow the fashions scrupulously, without ever being guilty of the slightest exaggeration.

Every smart beauty thought it necessary to possess, for home use in the mornings, a pretty cashmere dressing-gown, wadded and lined with silk, consisting of a loose polonaise made separate from the skirt. The under sleeves, of jaconet or cambric, were made with insertions of English embroidery, and a wide frill of the same embroidery, headed with insertions, ran round the neck and fell in a *jabot* in front. Dressing-gowns were also made of silk, satin, and brocade, lined with quilted silk, and trimmed with lace, velvet, galloon, or ribbon.



1857

For morning walks and calls, there were outdoor coats of rich silk, damask, rep, or *gros de Tours*, patterned with wreaths of flowers on a ribbed ground, black, green, maroon, or blue. These coats were worn either quite plain, or with trimmings of embroidery or woollen lace.

The milliners sent out numbers of silk bonnets, covered with *crêpe lisse*, and others of silk, with blonde trimmings. Some, and by no means the least pretty, were made of silk gathered on thick cord, running

round the brim, and edged with a triple row of blonde lace. These bonnets were always adorned with velvet flowers, pansies, auriculas, or primroses. Caps were the most dainty, delicate, filmy things that ever were conceived—some of blonde in spiral gathers, with clusters of flowers on each side; some, mere circular pieces of blonde disposed on half-wreaths of pink convolvulus, the tendrils falling backwards on the hair; some, of Mechlin lace, twisted round coils of ribbon; some of English point or Chantilly, arranged with matchless taste; and all, thanks to the simple style of hairdressing and costume then prevalent, and thanks, also, to the small silk apron so frequently worn indoors, giving their fascinating wearers a certain whimsical, prim, engaging air—the charm of the *soubrette* and of the high-born lady, all in one.

1857

Leghorn straw hats, trimmed with ostrich and marabout feathers, tulips, roses, lilac, lilies of the valley, and trails of delicate bindweed, were in high favour. On summer days, the ladies wore Barège dresses, or simpler gowns of jaconet, cambric, or brilliantine, with brilliant chintz patterns on a white ground. Small women, who feared being quite overwhelmed by the full dresses with triple flounces, wore one headed flounce only, placed at the bottom of the skirt. There were cool-looking gowns of cambric muslin, with white patterns on a pink ground, white jackets, worn over silk skirts, and white piqué coats. China crape shawls, white or coloured, richly embroidered in every shade, with pagodas and their inhabitants, fantastic birds, scattered flowers, and all the elaborate decoration peculiar to the Celestial Empire, were to be seen on every side. A simpler form of shawl was a large square of white net worked to imitate Valenciennes or some other lace, or guipure; and there were also black silk shawls with wide oriental-patterned borders, recalling Turkish embroideries, or the silk embroidery on cashmere shawls.

1858

Ball gowns constituted the chief tax on the Paris dressmaker's imagination. They were very full, and much trimmed towards the lower part of the skirt, so as to ensure their standing out in a wide circle. The scantiness of trimming near the waist was atoned for by the huge quantity placed lower down. Thus a dress adorned with lace flounces would have three or four puffings of tulle, over which the flounces were laid. All trimmings were arranged so as to give the skirts as spreading an effect as possible. For quiet occasions, square cut open bodies were in general favour. This style lent itself to various forms of decoration, such as trimmings of lace, blonde, puffed and gathered tulle, ribbon, embroidery, and so forth. A contemporary engraving shows us such a dress, of pearl-grey brocade, with puffings of tulle down the front, each held by a ribbon, tied in a bow in the centre. All round the skirt runs a blonde trimming, which also outlines the front of the open bodice, and is headed, round the *décolletage*, by a small tulle puffing. The sleeves are finished with two rows of blonde, also with a tulle heading. The fashion journals of 1850 alone give more than eighteen hundred different patterns for ball dresses. Evening cloaks, edged and lined with fur, or with quilted silk, were very constantly worn.

1859

1860

As regards hairdressing, the Marie-Stuart style was hard pressed by that called *à la Valois*, which was greatly favoured by the fair members of the school of the *tapageuses*, to which we have already referred. The hair, when dressed *à la Valois*, was gathered up Chinese fashion, and raised over cushions all round the forehead. Wreaths of flowers mingled with blonde appeared on every head. Each style of coiffure, so M. Challamel informs us, had its special name. The *Druid* was arranged with oakleaves, the *Naiad* consisted of all the flowers dear to the classic water-nymph, the *Leda* was composed of small feathers, the *Proserpine*

was all of wild flowers, such as Proserpine culled before she was carried off by Pluto ; the *Ceres* exhibited all the usual attributes of that liberal goddess.

As to jewels—great rows of large pearls, threaded in a circle, were twisted round the neck and fell to the waist. Then there were bracelets, gold and enamel, marcasite, cameo, and jewelled ; and round the neck, to heighten its whiteness, many ladies wore a band of velvet, over an inch wide. There were numbers of trinkets in green enamel, gold and enamel set with pearls, and oxydised silver. Hat pins and brooches were adorned with pearl or diamond pendants. Pagoda sleeves had come into fashion again, and with them armlets of ribbon or velvet, with bows or rosettes, which quite concealed the wearers' wrists.

1860

But let us turn from this wearisome catalogue of fashionable trifles, disinterred from the pages of old fashion journals, which even yet are not entirely without charm, and well worth occasional attention, and let us cast one final glance at society in 1850.

1860

Among the leaders of that society we may cite Mme. Wolowska, the Comtesse de Villars, Mme. Eugène Scribe, Mme. Victor Hugo, Mme. Anicet Bourgeois, Mme. Paillet, Mme. Achille Fould, the Comtesse Le Marrois, the Comtesse de Vergennes, the Marquise de Las Marismas, Mme. de Crussol, Mme. de Vogué, Mme. de la Rochefoucauld, Mme. de Caraman, Mme. Decazes, Mme. de Villeneuve, and most, in fact, of the great ladies who were to shine so brilliantly under the Second Empire.

In that happy year, of which we have just taken so cursory a view, no cloud disturbed the general serenity ; those who sought pleasure were free to do it without a moment's anxiety or fear for what the morrow might bring forth. Conversation turned chiefly on balloon ascents, on M. Pétin's hopes and plans, and on an aerial frigate, the *Eola*, upon which its inventor, a Spaniard named Montemayor, built all his hopes. The Californian gold mines were running in many people's heads. Not a few ladies dreamt of journeying to San Francisco.

THE AVENUE DU BOIS DE BOULOGNE

(1856).

WATCHING THE COMET

on the Boulevards (1857).

That distant country seemed, to their eager imagination, a fairy kingdom, with rivers of diamonds, and huge quarries knee-deep in precious stones.

1860

The year 1850 witnessed the disappearance of the last eccentric *dilettante* Paris will ever see. Since poor Carnavale's death, no male oddity, even the boldest, has ventured to tread the Boulevards in any habit but the sad-coloured one prescribed by modern fashion. Carnavale was no ordinary *dilettante*. He was a symbolist, and a harmonist as well. His garb varied according to the weather, the colour of his own thoughts, and the performances at the Italian Opera. When the "Barber of Seville" was to be played, he put on a canary-coloured coat; for the "Tancredi," he donned an apple-green jacket; for "Semiramide," he wore a red frockcoat; and for "Lucia" he affected a sky-blue garment. He walked abroad with ribbons about his neck, with floating sashes round his waist, and flowers and feathers in his hat, from a sheer spirit of *dilettantism*, which the overweeningly conceited self-advertisers of a later day, the various modern types of magi, *sars*, and latter-day æsthetes, have never contrived to reach.

1860

Carnavale, the friend of Malibran, of M. Laffe, of Bellini, and of Napoleon III., ceased at last to rejoice the eyes of the *habitués* of the Théâtre Italien and the Bibliothèque Nationale. Towards the middle of the century he disappeared—went out, like some gay-hued lantern, the last flicker of our brilliant romanticism. From 1850 onward there seems a doom, alas! to a universal greyness, which is to lead us to the mourning tints of the dark year of Sedan. The passing-bell of fancy tolls its knell, and dreary uniformity in masculine attire—the reign of equality in dress, in all its gloomy hideousness—straightway begins.

1858

CHAPTER VIII

LIFE IN PARIS UNDER THE SECOND EMPIRE

LEADERS OF THE GAY WORLD, AND *COCODETTES*

PERIODS such as that on which we are now about to enter cannot be approached without a certain feeling of doubt and discomfort. Hitherto we have treated of fashions all more or less graceful, and responding to a more or less strong sense of beauty in those who planned and wore them. Certain shortcomings, of course, have been pointed out, and some extremes of *déshabillé*, more pretty than decorous, have been indicated. But we have had no complaint to make, so far, of deliberate absurdity, of voluntary deformation of the lines of the female form, or any startling want of elegance in the arrangement of women's costume. With the Second Empire we reach the most hideous period in female dress that has ever vexed the artistic eye. We are face to face with a series of the most ungraceful, unbecoming, pretentious, and extravagant garments, whether for indoor or outdoor use, ever invented by the human brain. We come to the age of crinoline, and flounces, and furbelows, in their most insensate development. We must e'en make the best of the situation, though the lamentable taste with which our grandmothers were dressed need expect no mercy at our hands.

A remarkable change had come over society since the Revolution of 1848. The railways, which were being carried in every direction, had largely contributed to the sudden alteration in the general habits

of the French nation, which had hitherto been homekeeping and regular to the last degree.

The use of steam was soon followed, in the upper middle classes, by a taste for locomotion and travelling, for trips to the seaside, and inland watering-places. The new facilities for moving hither and thither brought about an almost general abandonment of that reserve which had kept the boundary-line of the non-travelling portion of the aristocracy so sharply defined. By degrees all the social classes mingled, fortunes were made more rapidly, *parvenus* of recent growth came to the front, and were generally and complacently received. The art of puffing became general in every rank, vanity reigned supreme, luxury and display grew vulgar, glaring, riotous.

Casinos and kursaals, ridottos, gambling saloons and dancing-rooms, were crowded. At Spa, at Baden-Baden, and, later on, at Monaco, courtesans and great ladies rubbed shoulders round the green cloth tables, all deep in roulette and games of chance.

A double female generation leaped into birth—the *cocotte* and the *cocodette*. The *cocotte*, the venal woman of the town, the harlot pure and simple, made Paris and many another town ring with her pranks and eccentricities, and with the fame of her loud and showy toilettes. The *cocodette*, on the other hand, the woman of the great world, satiated with, and weary of, her social triumphs, longing for excitement and clatter, aped the *phrynes* of her day, and eagerly adopted their exaggerated coiffure, their locks dyed tawny or bright red, their paint and gaudy ornaments, their jargon, and their free and easy manners. There was little, indeed, to choose, between the fashionable courtesan, *fille de marbre*, *biche*, or what you will, and the *cocodette*. One fought to earn her living, the other only struggled with the weariness and boredom of an empty, dreary, ill-balanced life, with no clear object in it, save amusement.

Cocottes and *cocodettes* together inaugurated a reign of ugliness, of huckstering, of moral corruption, and vulgarity. Never, all through the century, were beauty, and grace, and elegance so openly defied. Never was artistic feeling so conspicuous by its absence, never was art in so pitiable and despised a plight.

Any one who will glance at the pictures and engravings of that period, and note the frightful crinolines that swell every woman into a prop for yards of unnecessary stuff, the wide and ugly half sleeves, the high boots brought in by that senseless admiration for the calf of the human leg which affected a whole generation of Frenchwomen,

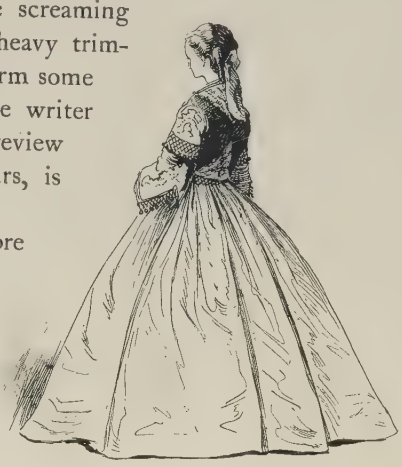
THE GARDENS AT MABILLE

(1858).

PRINKING BEFORE THE BALL

(*1858*).

the wild-looking heads of hair, on which tiny velvet caps, or bonnets with flying strings, were perched, without a chance of covering them, the hideousness of the materials in vogue, the screaming vulgarity of the colours, the thick stripes and heavy trimmings of all fashionable attire, will be able to form some idea of the complete bewilderment to which the writer who shall set himself, in another fifty years, to review the costumes of this nineteenth century of ours, is doomed.



1861

It would be difficult, indeed, to discover more violent contrasts of colour, or shades more contrary to the laws of harmony, than those which enjoyed so great favour during the Second Empire. Even now, alas, occasional specimens of this hideous taste may be seen in shop windows. How can such overwhelming violets, such cruel pinks, such glaring greens, such shabby cockchafer browns, such dirty greys, such blinding yellows, ever have left the dyer's hands? But all these cheap oleograph tints were received with acclamation, and reds of every kind, *solferino*, *marengo*, *sang de bœuf*, and so forth, enough to drive all the bulls in Andalusia into madness, were constantly invented, and greedily purchased.

The Empress Eugénie, on her accession to the throne, became at once, and naturally, the arbitress of Paris fashions. From the day of her marriage in Notre Dame, on January 30, 1853, her Spanish love of colour and contrast ruled French taste in dress. Her wedding-dress was of white velvet with a long train, the skirt completely covered with magnificent Alençon flounces, the body frogged in front with diamond wheat-ears. A veil of Alençon lace fell on her shoulders, and was attached to a small wreath of orange blossoms. A wonderful sapphire coronet and comb completed a costume which was greatly discussed and talked of at the time.

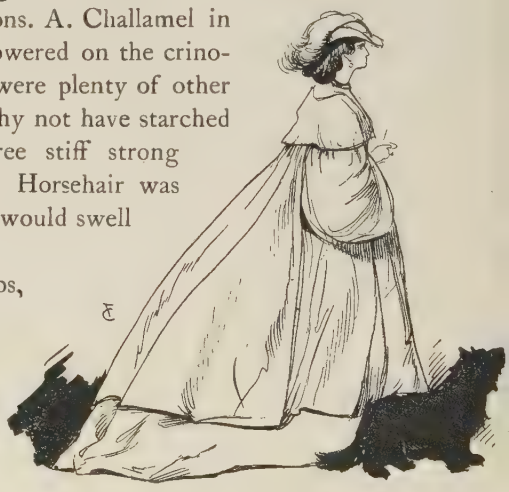
At that moment the Empress was wearing her hair turned up over her forehead, and this pretty style, which became her admirably, was soon generally adopted by the fashionable world; but in many cases, it should be added, it was eminently and inevitably unbecoming.

During the first years of the Empire, fashions altered very little from those of 1850. Skirts grew still fuller. Bodies were made *à la vierge*, *à la Pompadour*, and *à la Watteau*—these last trimmed in a very

graceful manner with lace, flowers, velvet, ribbons, ruches, and butterfly bows. There were endless shades of colour. One of the most sought after was a tint called *téba*, and there was a favourite yellow known as *aventurin*. For full dress, many ladies wore pink or blue watered-silk gowns, with basques trimmed with fringes, lace, or white feathers. Waists had grown a little shorter, but, on the whole, feminine costume was still elegant enough. The bonnets, small velvet caps, or straw hats, were in excellent keeping with the general effect of the dress, which was neither overfull nor over-trimmed. The tendency was to a gradual return, either to the fashions of the Consulate, or to the paniers of Louis XVI.'s time, when, during the second period of Napoleon III.'s reign, to the great astonishment of French ladies, who all felt the ridicule attached to the inconvenient and clumsy fashion, the hideous crinoline made its appearance, or, as we should rather say, suddenly and greatly enlarged its borders.

1861

"Incessant criticism," writes Mons. A. Challamel in his "Histoire de la Mode," "was showered on the crinoline. It was pointed out that there were plenty of other means for holding out flounces. Why not have starched petticoats or flounced ones, or three stiff strong calico petticoats one over the other? Horsehair was not the only thing in the world that would swell out skirts!



1861

"But, in spite, and indeed, perhaps, because of all its enemies, crinoline soon reigned supreme. Numbers of women who commenced by railing against the horrible invention began to wear starched and flounced petticoats, which, though less hideous than horsehair skirts, were inconvenient enough. The essential point was to increase circumference, to conceal all thinness, and, above all, to follow in the swim of current taste.

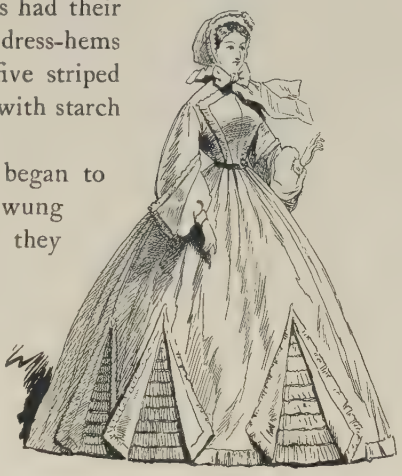
"Some real queens of fashion invented a whaleboned petticoat

CHILDREN IN THE TUILERIES GARDENS

(*1859*).

IN FRONT OF THE AMBIGU THEATRE
(*1861*).

something like a beehive in shape, the fulness of which was all on the hips and back, the front falling flat. Others preferred hoops, one above the other, like a barrel. The least pretentious had their flounces lined with coarse muslin, and their dress-hems with strips of horsehair, and wore four or five striped or checked muslin petticoats, stiff and heavy with starch —a terrible weight to carry.



1862

"As for the steel petticoats, which soon began to appear, they were not only ugly, but they swung helplessly from side to side. Very often, if they were too short, the skirt fell inward from the steel edge. Ladies in this case often caught a smile on the face of the male passer-by, but none ever deigned to notice 'so underbred' a demonstration of masculine disapproval.

"No Frenchman was more passionately absorbed in any political question than were his fellow countrywomen in the discussion on crinoline. Society was divided into two camps. In one, the enemies of the invention breathed fire and sword against it; in the other, its supporters appealed to the necessities of fashion, whose behests they held themselves bound religiously to follow. Gradually the habit of wearing crinoline grew general, and those who continued to abuse it were looked on as humbugs, or obstinate and prejudiced grumblers. However, though full skirts still carried the day, steel hoops and whalebone crinolines were gradually displaced by starched petticoats. This partial improvement weakened the opposition. But hooped skirts held their ground for a considerable period yet, and several years elapsed before a garment which the most ordinary good taste should have tabooed, the moment horsehair, whalebone, and steel springs entered into its composition, was utterly obliterated."

The amount of ink spilt in attacking and defending this extraordinary fashion, both in the press and in various contemporary pamphlets, is beyond all computation. M. Albert de la Fizelière, amongst others, published an entertaining little monograph on "Crinoline in bygone Times," which was followed by the Chevalier de Nisard's "Satire sur les Cerceaux, Paniers, Criardes, et Manteaux volants des Femmes."

A most interesting account might be written of the history of

crinoline, after 1855, with a description of the struggle between its adherents and opponents, and all the incidents and fugitive literature connected therewith. There is reason to believe that several poems, of ten or twelve cantos each, were inspired by the much-debated adjunct to feminine adornment.

1863

Montaigne, in earlier days, had fairly and wittily summed up the question, hinting that the ladies who retired behind such artificial fortification did it with the deliberate intention of tempting adventurous mankind to the attack.

The great French writer was surely in the right; and from the point of view of beauty, pure and simple, a woman's dress should follow the exquisite natural curves with which Nature has endowed her form. Nothing should be allowed to mask the full sweep of the bust, and dainty fall of the waist. The skirt should follow the outline of the limbs, falling naturally over the hips, and dying away in graceful folds that show off the ankle and well-shaped foot, under the delicate frills and deftly arranged trimmings of the lawn and silken petticoats.

Every successive form of fashion which has cramped woman up, or deformed her natural lines, has been a crime against her beauty, and an obstacle thrown in the way of natural selection. The stiff, starched modes which hide or distort the shape have always, it is asserted, been worn, and imposed on others, by sovereigns who were intent on hiding their own personal defects, their ill-shaped busts and hips, or poverty of charms.

1863

However that may be, never in the history of French costume were such hideously frightful productions to be seen, as the dresses which, for over fifteen years, were spread over the huge hencoops known as crinolines.

Future historians will hardly persuade our grandsons that anything so lamentable can have existed, and their horror will be increased by the fact that the deformity and exaggeration of feminine

RACING AT THE BOIS DE BOULOGNE

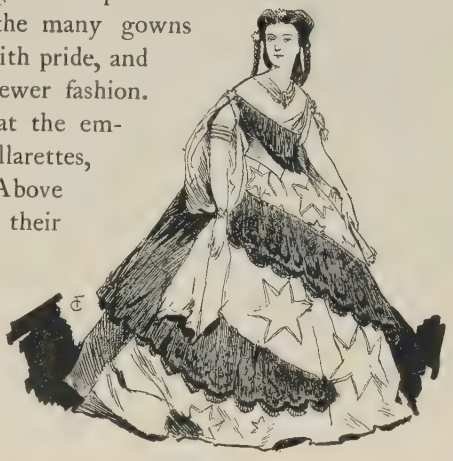
(*1862*).

THE NEW "FOYER" AT THE THEATRE FRANÇAIS

Portrait of Mme de R. in 1863.

attire under the Second Empire was not atoned for by a single touch of originality, or artistic feeling.

But between 1851 and 1870 the changes of fashion were so incessant as to fill their would-be historian with alarm. An attempt at a cursory examination of the fashion journals of those twenty years has resulted, over and above a splitting headache, in the melancholy conviction that two years of incessant labour would hardly suffice, to draw up a mere historical summary of the costumes of the Second Empire. Will our fair readers—or those of them who have reached an age when fireside reveries, and memories of past days, have grown a pleasant pastime—cast their thoughts back over the many gowns they have chosen with delight, exhibited with pride, and cast aside, for the sake of others of still newer fashion. Will they glance within their wardrobes, at the embroidered openwork *pagoda* sleeves, the collarettes, and scarves, and cashmeres, of old days. Above all, will they call up the gowns worn by their friends, the gowns they envied, and the mantles they longed for. This done, they will surely admit not only that the dress of those days was vanity, but that the very memory of it is hazy, and that scarce a trace remains with them of all the hurrying procession of styles and colours, once so eagerly watched, and rapturously admired.



1863

Does any lady recollect the Talma cloaks, the Mousquetaire capes, and the *rotonde*, that fearsome circular wrap which fell over the crinoline, and made every woman who wore it look like a sugarloaf? And the shawls—the Indian cashmeres and the Indian woollen shawls, the *mouzaïa* or Tunisian shawl, striped white or blue, or red and green, and the Algerian burnous, with its white goats'-hair tassels? And the *manteau Impératrice*, and the short mantles, and the short skirts? And then the unbleached cambric hoods with ribbon bows, and the muslin hoods on blue and mauve and rose-coloured linings, and the woollen ones, for wearing at the seaside or in the country?

Frankly, dear ladies, they were all ugly, and in lamentable taste, you must acknowledge it!

Our sexagenarian readers will not find it wearisome, we trust, if we remind them further of their Greek and Turkish and Zouave jackets,

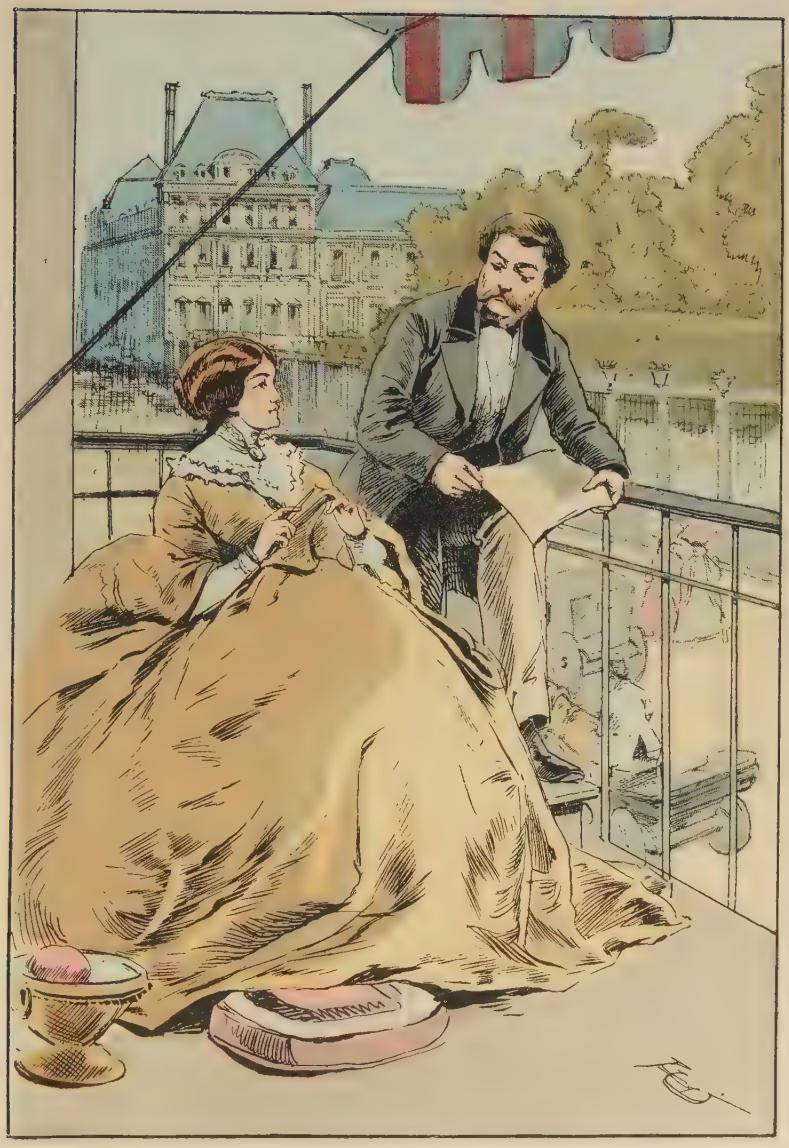
their *Ristoris* and their *Figaros*, unbecoming garments in themselves, but which endued their wearers with a sort of daring, boyish, hoydenish air, a touch of boldness and independence, that was occasionally more than fascinating. Then there were the mantles, of smooth-faced cloth, or corded silk, laden with heavy braids and embroideries, and edged with lambskin, dyed black, and known as Astrachan fur. Do not the words "Astrachan and braiding" bring the whole period of the Second Empire before your eyes? Do you not see again, in memory, Gagelin's long narrow fashion plates, with ladies' figures, full face, back, and profile, displaying long wraps, overloaded with cords and openwork, and braids and tasseled girdles, and heavy military-looking embroideries of every kind, and with huge facings of black Astrachan—the very acme, it was claimed, of comfort and of smartness! And was that all? No; recollect again the little pilot-coats, and boating-jackets, and rowing-blouses, with which you crammed your travelling trunks before you started on your travels, at the beginning of the holidays.

1864

These country garments were made of light woollen stuffs, of alpaca, and thin black silk, and all adorned with the same intricate braiding, the mania of the day—the imperial fancy, the much-adored and universally adopted badge of fashion.

And do you not remember the *Lydie* jackets, the *Lalla Rookh* coats, and the opera cloaks christened *Vespertina?* They were worn with the *Señorita* jackets, in velvet, silk, light-coloured cashmeres, or woollen materials. And then the Russian shirts and Garibaldis, in washing foulards, and white, red, blue, and light-brown silks, with embroideries of braid or Russian stitchery. And does not the mention of the Louis XV. coats and waistcoats of English-patterned cloth, in black and shades of grey, stir aught within your memories? Shall we, to wake another recollection, say just one word about the garment known as the *péplum Impératrice*, a little corslet with a large square basque in front and at the back, the sides of which hung very long. A very valuable and praiseworthy fashion, this, seeing it rid us of the hateful crinoline, and did more good work, by means of its shape alone, than all the tracts and pamphlets, all the ordinances and sermons and varied eloquence of Press and Church combined.

One manufacturer, we are told, invented skirts with springs, one



ON A BALCONY IN THE RUE DE RIVOLI

(*1864*).

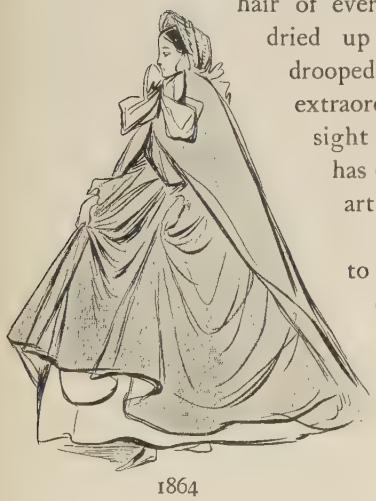
THE PICTURE EXHIBITION AT THE SALON

Looking at Manet's "Olympia"

part of which could be detached at will; another patented a kind of transparent parasol; and a third, a system of ventilating the head under the hair; a fourth flooded Paris with spring hooks for petticoats, to which he gave the high-sounding name of *Epicycloïdes*. Trade was busy and brisk, and Paris tradesmen often proved their good taste, even in supplying ungainly fashions. There were earrings in the style known as *aquarium*, and gold chains, called *benoîton*, which passed, like a curb, under the chin. There were Russia leather shoes and Russia leather belts with metal buckles. Every lady carried a load of chains and trinkets; and heads of the fashionable tints—yellow, tomato-red, mahogany, and every other impossible exaggeration of the true Venetian blonde—were crowned with hats and bonnets dubbed Trianon, Lamballe, Watteau, or Marie Antoinette! Oh those appalling tumbled heads! They may, indeed, as the smart *lorettes* declared, have possessed a *sacré chien;* but, looking at them across the intervening years, we are fain to murmur, "*Quelle dégringolade, mon Empereur!*"

1864

Those untidy locks straying wildly about, mingled with false hair of every kind, burnt with acids, ruined with hot tongs, dried up with ammonia, those dead-looking tresses that drooped in curls, or looped in chignons, beneath those extraordinary hats and bonnets, were the most untempting sight man ever gazed upon. No other decadent epoch has offered more unlovely specimens of the wigmaker's art.



1864

The ladies of the latter period of the Empire seemed to delight in approaching the very edge of caricature; no costume was too paradoxical, no fashion too exaggeratedly vulgar, for them. The more wild and mad and utterly improbable a woman's dress became, the more reasonably she might expect to hear herself proclaimed the reigning queen of fashion. The Boulevard newspapers, just then beginning the reporting system, gave minute descriptions of dresses which were a deliberate insult to reason and

common sense. These extraordinary figures with their hair tied in *catogans*, their heads crowned with huge loops and bows, their great curls floating behind, their heavy plaits, their wavy ringlets and fluffy locks falling over their eyes, had no natural grace and charm at all. The whole effect was false, meretricious, theatrical, unnatural, and improper looking. When, as she often did, the fair Parisian crowned these thickets and waves and twists of hair with a tiny hat as round as a bonbon-box, and donned her short-skirted dress of the gayest hues, or her silk robes striped with the colours of some fashionable racing stable, she looked—forgive the term, it is a true description—not unlike a dressed-up ape, hung with chains and trinkets, and brandishing a walking-stick parasol.

1863

The smart ladies of that period really looked like monkeys, with their strange contortions and eager cunning faces; and the men, in their morning jackets and light trousers, with their Tyrolese hats and peacocks' feathers, were just as unlovely objects, worthy to bear them company. The *cocodès* and *petits crevés*, who had replaced the *Daims*, the *Lions*, and *Gants jaunes* of former days, were a pitiful race, weakly, unhealthy, smeared with pomades and scents, feeble of speech, and utterly absurd, and their dress, exquisite as they themselves considered it, was ludicrous, hideously ugly, and contrary to every rule of taste. The following epigram in somewhat indifferent rhyme appeared somewhere about March 1867:

"Le chapeau de forme est très bas,
Le gilet est presque invisible;
Le pantalon, lui, c'est risible,
Est collant du haut jusqu'en bas.
L'habit est plus court qu'une veste,
Le tout est si court qu'on en rit:
Devons-nous parler de l'esprit?
Il est aussi court que le reste."

At Compiègne, Biarritz, Dieppe, Trouville, the Eaux Bonnes, Plombières, wherever, in short, the leaders of the fashionable world, the most successful adventuresses of the Bohemian section of society, and all the women of every class with money in their purses, gathered them-

selves together, luxury was carried to the most unheard-of pitch. Every one strove to outdo her neighbour, not only in the magnificence of her attire, but in her free and easy manner, her wild extravagance, her astounding whims ; squandering thousands in the most ridiculous fashion, not for the sake of any real beauty or value to be obtained, but simply to make onlookers stare. Knitted woollen shawls, with red flounces, were to be seen side by side with splendid brocaded gowns, silken skirts striped with gold and silver, richly embroidered jackets, gorgeous scarves, Arab burnouses clasped with diamonds, gold-striped tarlatans, and gold-embroidered laces, not to speak of all the jewels, lockets, brooches, crosses, necklaces and pendants of gems, and all the gilded baubles, and apparel fit for mountebanks, which flooded even the quietest and most unpretentious watering-places.

The ball dresses made for the winter festivities in Paris were of a splendour past description. In 1869, the Duchesse de Mouchy wore nearly two millions (francs) worth of diamonds, at the Beauvais ball. Her dress, on that occasion, consisted of a trained skirt of white gauze sprinkled with silver, over it a shorter skirt, of currant-coloured silk, was gathered, apron-shape, in front. The bodice, cut very low and square, was fastened at the shoulders with epaulettes, blazing with jewels. A broad garland of flowers and silvered foliage passed across one shoulder, and fell slanting over the skirt. The effect, as the reader will imagine, must have savoured more of splendour than of taste.

1865

But the well-bred Parisian lady, it is only fair to admit, never lost her individuality. She always kept the reins in her own hands, and passed from one fashion to another without ever coming into absolute collision with good taste, or what was then dignified by that title. She alone possessed the rare gift of knowing where exaggeration must end, and whenever she fell in love with some odd whimsical fashion, her lead might be ungrudgingly followed, and her graceful fancy safely imitated. The true Parisian chose her milliner and dressmaker with the most perfect tact and the most admirable discernment. She would have no loud colours, no aggressive styles, no flaring headgear. She leaned towards the quiet shades of colour, the vanillas and ambers, the tender browns

and olives, and turned her back on crimsons and pompadour greens, and solferino reds. But this Parisian *par excellence*, of whom we speak, was not always a lady of the Court, nor the wife of a great financier. Her rank in the aristocracy of good taste was often higher than that she held in the lists of the peerage. She was never a *parvenue*, nor connected with the sudden successes of commerce and the Bourse.

1865

Towards the end of the Second Empire, the crinoline disappeared finally from sight. Gradually the ladies' skirts grew smaller, and their wearers returned to close-fitting gowns, and a respect for the natural lines of the human form. The skirts *à la Chinoise* were, so to speak, the last phase of this diseased fashion, which seriously imperilled, at one moment, the Frenchwoman's imperishable reputation for good taste. But the great war was close upon us, and the Empire was not destined to reap the benefit of this return to common sense and graceful outline.

We have glanced at the costumes, let us turn now for a moment to the customs, of the Second Empire.

The leisured and fashionable classes of society seemed loath to return to their winter quarters, so delightful was life in the various country-houses. Hunting went on even in December, and the great woods echoed to the deep-mouthed music of the hounds. The merry horn was heard in every quarter. At Compiègne, at Fontainebleau, at Chantilly, at Gros-Bois, in Touraine and Normandy, and the Nivernais, east and west, and north and south, the sport went on, till huntsmen and masters of packs were fairly exhausted.

The winter season was none the less gay because the general return to town was somewhat delayed; for balls, concerts, and dancing-parties were still the chief delight of Parisian society; and entertainments of all three descriptions were the rage at Court, and in aristocratic, financial, and middle-class circles. The Princesse Mathilde gave gorgeous *fêtes*. There were balls at the houses of the Duchesse Pozzo di Borgo, Mme. Walewska, and Mme. de Biré. There were concerts and dances given by the Comtesse de Behague, the Comtesse d'Indry and Mme. Troplong. The concerts were not unfrequently followed by drawing-room plays or operettas. These entertainments were immensely in fashion, until they were supplanted, at last, by the new mania for

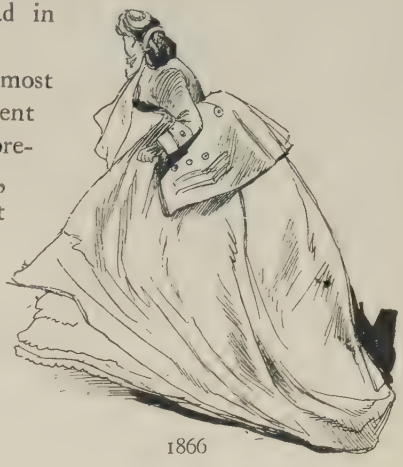
IN FRONT OF THE PALAIS DE L'INDUSTRIE

Coming back from the Races (1866).

FETE GIVEN AT THE TUILERIES

(*1867*).

poses plastiques—tableaux vivants of the classic order, in which the most doubtful stories in Greek mythology were represented on a mimic Olympus, by the fairest goddesses of society, clad in flesh-coloured tights.



1866

The *cocodettes* of the Second Empire took an almost fiendish delight in the construction and arrangement of the very primitive draperies necessary to the representation of such scenes as the Judgment of Paris, Jupiter and Leda, Diana and Endymion, and a host of others, highly picturesque, but eminently suggestive. The crinoline imposed by remorseless fashion so completely concealed the natural form of the body, that these ladies, we must suppose, made the desire to prove their possession of beauties which were hidden by their ordinary dress, an excuse for their recourse to "fleshings."

Even Lent did not check the eagerness of the pleasure-seekers, nor quench their ardent thirst for balls and theatres and concerts. The sermons of Père Hyacinthe, then a fashionable preacher at Notre-Dame, and spoken of as M. de Barante's probable successor at the Academy, were largely attended, it is true. But the pet preacher's discourses had but little real effect. His hearers came largely as a social duty, because it was the correct thing to listen to the lion of the day, and because, without attending his addresses, there was no talking connectedly about them. But the fair congregation was hardly beyond the great doors of Notre Dame, before each member took her way—not to don the hair shirt and sleep on a couch of ashes—but to listen to Patti at the Opera, to admire the charming if somewhat rowdy Hortense Schneider in that piece of pitiful clowning, the "Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein," or else to revel in the splendid staging and dazzling decorations of some fairy extravaganza, like the "Biche au Bois"; which done, our fair lady hastened to sup on truffled partridges, and drank her last glass of iced champagne just when she should have been thinking of going to matins. In a certain sense, indeed, Lent was

1866

the wildest and gayest of carnivals. Even when Easter came, entertaining was still in full swing. Every week the close of the season was foretold, and every week the festivities began afresh.

1867

"Mme. de Saint-Agamemnon's last party for this winter takes place to-night," we read; "Fraschini will sing."

"The Princess Labribescoff's last party. A proverb by Octave Feuillet will be acted."

"At the last party to be given by Mons. W. the banker, a new steam-engine, which is expected to supplant everything now used for railway work, will be exhibited at work on a tea-table."

"Major Zinezermann's (Austrian Army) very last party for this winter. Imitations of Thérésa."

And so forth. Parties all night and parties every day. The Longchamp racecourse had come into favour again. The Grand Prix was eagerly anticipated. Gladiateur and Fille de l'Air had given a certain fillip to fashion. And besides, the Grand Prix Day marked the utmost duration of the season of party-giving, and the opening of that of country and seaside pleasures. People discussed racing probabilities, and calculated the winnings of the principal owners, the Comte de Lagrange, M. Delamarre, Baron Finot, Charles Laffite, and M. Achille Fould. The Grand Prix de Paris had taken the place of the drive to Longchamp. The last eccentricity of costume, the newest fashions in dress and carriages, the beauties of society, and the smart women of the *demi-monde*, all the actresses, domestic and professional, were there, and the human comedy, or harlequinade, was played in surroundings of extraordinary splendour. Women and flowers smiled everywhere. Mabille literally swarmed with visitors on the evening of the great day. "The ladies of the Empire," writes Arsène Houssaye in his most interesting and entertaining "Confessions," evidently tinged by their author's personal admirations and pleasant memories of his youth, "were a bevy of dazzling creatures, all full of the charm of beauty and—more or less—of wit. Who can doubt it when I quote such names as the Duchesse de Mouchy, the Comtesse de Saulcy, the Baronne de Vatry, the Comtesse Walewska, the Duchesse de Persigny, the Comtesse de Moltke, Mme. Bartholoni, the Comtesse de Pourtalès, the Princesse

Poniatowska, the Marquise de Galiffet, the Comtesse de Sancy-Parabère, the Duchesse de Morny, the Vicomtesse Aguado, Mme. de Lima, the Baronne de Beyens, Mme. Péreire, the Baronne Alphonse de Rothschild, Mme. Magnan, Mlle. Bechwith,* the Marquise de Canisy, Mme. Moulton, the Comtesse de Mercy-Argenteau, the Marquise de Chasseloup-Laubat, Mme. Pilié, the Comtesse de Castiglione, Mme. de Montaut, the Maréchale Canrobert, the Duchesse de Malakoff, Mme. Callier, Mme. Carter, Mme. Jankowska, the Comtesse de Brigode, and Mme. Carette? And how many more I might name, who, if they did not fulfil all the canons of loveliness, were at all events beautiful by sheer force of wit, like the Princesse Metternich!

"Such fair women gave a touch of magic beauty to Court and social festivities. No one was surprised to hear it said, 'The Empire is making merry!' Why not? The balls at the Tuileries, invitations to which were the prescriptive right of all official persons, did not satisfy the gay Court circle, and more restricted entertainments were given by the Empress and her ladies, and by some of the ministers. The favourite form of festivity was a costume ball, at which the ladies were masked."

"Even I myself," continues M. Houssaye, "even I myself pandered to this more or less innocent folly, by giving Venetian masked balls. The Tuileries are burnt down now. There is dancing still, at the Elysée. But the cotillon is a thing of the past. Where are they all — d'Aiguesvives, Castelbajac, and Jaucourt? De Caux himself, who still twirls on his red heels, would not attempt a cotillon now, even if Adelina Patti herself trilled like a bird in the orchestra. Cotillons are still danced, 'tis true, but who leads them? The flying squadron of the old days whirls no more. The Comtesse Walewska mourns her daughter; the Princesse Metternich, that truest of Parisians, has gone back to her home in Vienna. The Comtesse de Pourtalès and her friends are still with us in their maturer beauty; but how many faces that shone in the Empire days are shadowed now! General Fleury, not content with keeping the best-appointed table in Paris, gave entertainments of fabulous magnificence,

1867

* Hon. Mrs. Dudley Leigh.

which recalled the glories of the French Court in the days of Mme. de Montespan, Mme. de Pompadour, and Marie Antoinette. At one of his parties at the Hôtel d'Albe, the four elements were represented by the guests assembled to do honour to the lovely Empress and her Decameron. It was an enchanting picture. The general would not admit the presence, at these far-famed balls, of any woman whom Nature had not gifted with exquisite outline and well-rounded forms. The less distinguished members of the Court circle received the legendary 'hint to stay away,' and the select few who were invited formed, I will not say an invincible, but an irresistible cohort. It was a charming sight to behold earth, water, air, and fire, all battling in the cotillon, as they had fought two centuries before, within the Palace of Versailles. The evening was so gay, that even the Emperor, who, at the Palace festivities, frequently looked the picture of boredom, was to be seen dancing merrily with the Princesse Mathilde, while Prince Metternich or the Prince de Croy danced with the Empress.

1868

"And all that joyous crowd, so full of life, and wit, and passion, whither has it passed? To the four corners of this world, and beyond it! Where are Saint-Maurice, Finot, La Redorte? Where the Prince of Orange, Caderousse, Rivoli, Heckeren, Massa, Ezpenletta? not to mention others, of more meditative, though no less open countenance, such as Morny, La Valette, Persigny, Girardin, Laferrière, Nigra, Mérimée, Fleury, Edgar Ney, Corregliano, Pisani? And why not quote Troplong, who took his enjoyment out of others' pleasures, and could have written a code of laws for polite society? The merrymaking was universal. The Duchesse de Morny, the Duchesse de Bassano, the Comtesse Walewska, Mme. de la Pagerie, the Duchesse d'Albe, the ministers, the senators, all opened hospitable doors. What money thrown out of windows, and to good purpose too! Seine sands grew rich as those of Pactolus. Even in the outlying faubourgs, folk were prosperous, for all the beneficent fairies of labour were busy at their work. . . . . Nowadays nobody throws anything out of window, and Paris lives on theories. Democracy keeps others in a whirl—it does no dancing of its own!"

We have gladly quoted the testimony of M. Arsène Houssaye, for he was one of those who saw the society of the Empire from the best

THE PALMY DAYS OF THE CAFE DE LA ROTONDE

In the Palais-Royal (1868).

THE SHELTER ON THE LONGCHAMPS RACE COURSE

(1868).

point of view, sitting in the front row, as it were, while his own social success was at its height, and his young blood coursed swiftly through his veins. Not a *côterie*, not an evening party, not a gathering, large or small, was counted complete without him, and no literary man was better qualified to tell the tale of the dazzling Imperial festival which was to have so dreary a morrow—a morrow whose bitterness and pain still stirs the soul, and wrings the heart, of every Frenchman.

His "Confessions" ring out the glories of a time when we were still boys, nailed to our school benches. Such recollections as we can boast, if we dared call on them to help us in this matter, would prove too childish, too uncertain, too misty, in the truest sense, to be of any value.

Yet the writer of this work bears with him, in the dark chambers of his memory, some dim conception of what Paris was, at the close of the Imperial epoch, when the Court, aped by that section of the townsfolk who would fain have been connected with the Court, worked all the showy splendours we have attempted to describe, into confusion worse confounded. The gilded state-carriages with their powdered lackeys, the crowd returning from the Bois in all the glamour of rich attire and feminine loveliness, the Emperor re-entering the Tuileries under the slanting rays of the setting sun—all rise before his eyes. "La Curée," one of the best, and probably the least known and least appreciated of all the works of Emile Zola, contains a masterly account of the splendour of the Champs Elysées on the evening of a race-day at Longchamps. It shows us Paris in all its fullest life, as it throbbed in 1869—its *lorettes* and courtesans, kept women, *rastaquouères*, all the species who lived, and moved, and had their being in those wild and wonderful days —the days when princes wandered up and down the Boulevards, and when from every corner flamed out that epicurean motto with which Rabelais adorned his immortal work, "*Vivez joyeux!*"

1868

The Boulevard, with its crowds of loungers, male and female, is

present still in the author's memory, the figures changing constantly, the colours never losing their gay charm. The same passion for rich dress and splendid appearance filled every heart, from the duchess to the *cocotte*, from the artist to the *cocodès*, from the man of letters to the schoolboy, from the stockholder to the street rough, from the beggar to the citizen, from Turcaret, in short, to M. Prudhomme! Every soul, to sum it up, was bent on *chic*, on smartness and on style, on success with the opposite sex, and epicurean enjoyment. And the Boulevard de l'Empire is not forgotten. From the heights of the Rue de Bréda, the wanton-eyed battalions of the Cytherean army took their way, smiling and ogling, with fluffy heads, and hats jauntily cocked, short skirts, and bodices cut open heart-shape, bound with floating sashes, the banners of their giddy trade. They would sit, before the dinner-hour, in front of the cafés, puffing their cigarettes, tempting the passer-by, with painted cheeks and reddened lips, each lively lady coquettishly displaying her high-heeled, silver-tasseled boots, and the well-shaped red-stockinged calves above them.

1869

Foreigners in search of amusement passed along the side-walks, taking stock, like grooms, with glistening eyes and covetous lips, of the various points of beauty offered for their inspection, and, like Paris, seeking to decide on whom their choice should fall. Other passers-by came too, in numbers, all the *viveurs* of Paris, and journalists, great and small, carelessly dressed, looking, and intending to look, thoroughly at home. And up and down among them all, amid the rumble of wheels and the hawkers' noisy shouts, went the inevitable *gavroche* in his blouse, sharp-eyed, his hands deep in his pockets, shouting the catchword of the moment, the idiotic "*Hé! Lambert!*" or some street song, come lately into vogue, such as "Le Pied qui remue."

On the nights of the old Opera balls, the Boulevard des Italiens was one moving mass of maskers, in the queerest and most grotesque disguises, shouting, gesticulating, gabbling, in indescribable confusion, while above the din "Punch and Judy" calls whistled sharp and shrill. The cafés blazed with light, and the whole scene breathed popular delirium. The Empire was justly dubbed "The merrymaking period," and the passion ran through every caste of the Parisian population, from highest to lowest.

When darkness fell, the revelling still went on, within the brilliantly

THE SQUARE OF THE TUILERIES

(*1870*).

lighted restaurants. From every window the sound of gaiety floated forth. Pianos jangled—the chords half drowned by laughter, the tread of dancing feet, and clatter of plates, by songs taken up in merry chorus, and loud-voiced questions and answers without end. When day broke, the dishevelled revellers, male and female, poured into the streets, and sought their homes. And the grey light of dawn fell on the deserted Boulevard, where the street-sweepers were already wiping out the traces of past orgies, while the *chiffonnier* (scarce a specimen of the tribe is left in Paris now) pursued his strange and unsavoury avocation.

The Parisian woman of the Empire period will, we feel assured, be recognised in the history of the century as a very distinct and special, though somewhat unattractive type. We can already, in spite of the comparatively short space of time which has elapsed since that period, realise the more evident peculiarities connected with the second epoch of Imperial Government in France. Some posthumous "Mémoires," written by Horace de Viel-Castel, and published a few years since, are even now, in spite of their author's sceptical ill-nature and stupid love of gossip and twaddle, full of an interest allied to that of Tallemant des Réaux' anecdotes, though without his wit and eloquent diction.

Interesting matter touching the men and women of the Second Empire, is being collected in many quarters, and we shall not, probably, have to await the beginning of the twentieth century, to be in a position to form a fair judgment of Napoleon III.'s reign of twenty years, and decide for ourselves as to the justice of the philosopher's aphorism :

"The degree of a nation's degradation may be exactly measured by the point of effrontery to which a woman of that nation may venture, without rousing scandal."

In the eyes of the writer of this book (and the assertion is made without any thought of affecting the judgment of posterity), the Imperial era, from 1851 to 1870, stands condemned to the execration of every artist, by reason of its prevailing and almost invariable want of taste in every particular. All intelligence, feeling, and delicacy, in decorative matters of every kind, were conspicuous by their absence. The writers, painters, sculptors, and musicians who reached eminence during the reign of the second Emperor, reached it without any help

or real encouragement from his Government. The Empire in itself had no genuine sympathy either with literature or with art. In spite, therefore, of its brilliant prosperity, and the great works performed under its *ægis*, the second Napoleonic period cannot be said to have left a very original mark on the national style of ornament in particular, nor on art in general.

As far as the fair sex was concerned, it adopted, between 1851 and 1870, roughly speaking, a tone, a general style of manners and of dress, that nobody, we may be sure, will care to revive ; and the fact that these were obediently copied and aped by all contemporary nations, inspires but a poor opinion of human intelligence, and of the beneficent influence of feminine taste on the revolutions of fashion.

CHAPTER IX

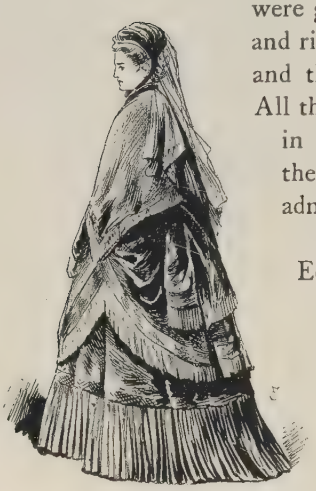
THE FAIR SEX, AND FASHIONS IN GENERAL FROM 1870 TILL 1880

LUXURY and splendour, and all the wild display peculiar to the Empire, were so overcast by the gloomy events of the Franco-Prussian war, that the easy-going and dissipated habits of the ten preceding years fled in a trice, and were replaced by a sort of concentrated seriousness bordering on remorse, and a simplicity of dress which almost savoured of downright poverty.

The ring-laden hands that had applauded the wild pranks of the opera-balls, and led gay cotillons at the Tuileries dances—those hands that Jouvin had gloved, and Guerlain had daintily perfumed, stripped, now, of their sparkling diamonds and gleaming pearls, worked busily in camp and hospital, preparing lint and compounding healing salves.

It was a mighty change. Ambulances were established at the very spots whereon the raree shows of the Empire had shone their brightest. All the scenes of the vain and useless delights of bygone days were streaked with the red bands of the Geneva cross. The white-capped sisters hovered like white doves over bleeding brows that the Napoleonic eagle had wounded in his heavy flight. Women who had been frivolous and puerile, hitherto, grew absolutely sublime.

The heroism that lies dormant in every woman's breast woke with a start, to console and encourage every struggling man. The days of pleasure were gone by. This was the hour of duty, stern and rigid, and rigidly performed, all through the war with foreign foes, and the terrible civil strife which followed close upon it. All the daintiness and fancy which Frenchwomen had spent in dress and personal adornment were lavished, now, on their care of the wounded, and on innumerable forms of admirable self-sacrifice.



1870

Théophile Gautier, in his "Tableaux du Siège," and Edmond de Goncourt, in his "Journal," have left us some stirring pictures of these scenes—sketches from the life, instantaneous photographs, as it were, of people and of things.

"Wounded soldiers are the fashion," writes De Goncourt on November 11, 1870. "They are constantly asked for," and his words prove how completely the taste of the fair sex had turned to graver matters, as events marched on. In another place, again, he enumerates all the different classes of devoted women who spent their existence in performing the humblest and yet the noblest of the services war renders necessary. "Beside a lady in silk attire, you will find a humble woman in a cap. Workwomen, *bourgeoises*, women of the town, one dressed up in the uniform of the National Guard—amongst them a poor wretch, half of whose face is one great bruise. None of these women wear the same air of apathetic resignation as the men. Bitterness and rage are written on their faces. Some of them have a wild look in their eyes. The sole sign of weakness—and this only the least brave of them vouchsafe—is a little droop of the head to one side—that droop we see in women who have spent hours on their knees in church. One or two draw their veils over their faces, but a non-commissioned officer, brutally inclined, lays his cane against a veil and says, 'Now then, off with those veils! Show us your faces, you jades!'"

Ladies who had never known what privation and manual labour meant, cast away all thought of personal comfort, and gave all their care and attention to the groaning occupants of the hospital-beds. Love, the passionate, was struck down by pity. Or shall we not rather say that love was tranformed into pity, gentle and tremulous, and fled boudoir and opera-box to hover in wistful anxiety over the

ON THE PARIS RAMPARTS

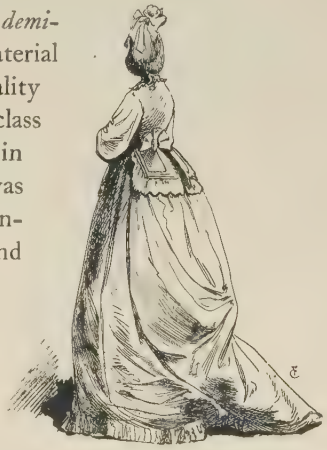
During the War of 1870.

busy surgeons, and devoted chaplains, intent on their errand of mercy?

Théophile Gautier writes of a visit to the Comédie Français: "In the linen-room on the lower storey we found the beautiful Delphine Marquet, rolling bandages. The famous actress sat alone, gravely and carefully performing her charitable task."

Lips that had showered kisses, and declaimed the passionate lines of famous poets, now murmured words of prayer and exhortation. Soft, gentle hands were laid on the scarred faces and smarting limbs of the wounded soldiers, and strove to heal the agonising hurts inflicted by Prussian bullets. Victor Hugo has sung the virtues and the bravery of French women, at this juncture, in burning lines of golden praise, likening them to the noblest female warriors of past ages. Théodore de Banville has wreathed their feet with his most flowery and elaborate verse. The world in general acknowledged that the frivolity of the gay courtiers of Biarritz and the Tuileries had given place to something more holy, more worthy of respect. The general sense of the solemn reverence due to the presence of death, and of the indomitable pride with which the country must face insult and the bitterness of defeat, was disseminated, at this overwhelming moment, by the women of France.

This terrible year is marked by a sudden check in all things connected with luxury, both in society and in the *demi-monde*. Dress grew more and more modest, both in material and in style. There was a sort of momentary equality amongst women of every rank. Duchesses and middle-class dames, paid courtesans, singers, nuns, all joined hands in touching harmony, to face the public disaster. There was a sort of shadow, of half-light, both in costumes and in consciences. No one ventured on the old extravagance and exaggeration, either in dress or furniture. The days were past when Mlle. Mars had only to appear on the boards in some new-fashioned mantle, or novel coiffure, to ensure its being adopted by the town. The leg-of-mutton sleeves of Charles X.'s time, the gowns brought into fashion by Mlle. Rachel under Louis Philippe, and the crinolines of the Second Empire, all faded out of sight, making way for a far more serious and more dignified style of dress. The roar of the great guns had hushed the frivolous empty chatter of the fair Parisienne, and for many a month yet, the terror of those fearful days was to linger in her heart.



1870

Extreme richness of attire was quite forsworn. Dresses, like the national tricolor, were veiled in crape. Point d'Alençon and point d'Angleterre no longer graced the necks and wrists of gowns and mantles. Even the gay women by profession lived less ostentatiously. Intrigue grew more discreet, and scandal less apparent. Women's lives were much more full of real feeling and true kindness. It almost seemed as if the collapse of the crinoline had relieved its wearers of all their emptyheadedness and hardheartedness, and superficiality of thought and occupation. Numbers of pretty heads which had been turned by the fair Empress's bewitching smile, cast off their scornful frivolous air for ever, and grew reasonably serious, and even a trifle sad. Over the places of public resort, laid waste by *pétroleuses* and Prussian guns, a great dark pall of melancholy and mourning seemed to hang.

1871

It was only by slow degrees, and under the pretext of charity, that casinos, concert-rooms, and theatres began at last to open their doors.

Patriotic feeling was the only excuse admitted for merrymaking. The interest in all military matters daily increased. The merry pranks of Déjazet, the dancing of Carlotta, ceased to draw the town. The "Marseillaise" had to be dragged into every chorus. The railing republicanism of Béranger's verses once more embellished the jokes and catchwords of the period. The Government of M. Thiers, with its tyrannical middle-class methods, would have none of the showy exhibitions of former days.

M. Thiers had not enjoyed the educational advantages of the old kings of France. He had not been brought up, like Louis Philippe, by a Mme. de Genlis, or, like Charles X., by a priestly tutor. Pressing reasons of policy, and all the difficult complications of international relations, lay heavy on Parliament and magistracy alike. The reaction, religious and political, was not so evident in the official declarations of the Government, as in a sort of tacit agreement between all the branches of authority, to put down the garish displays which had distinguished the Imperial epoch.

But this state of stupor was not of long duration.

The real spirit of the French nation, restless and aggressive, many-sided and light-hearted, soon ruled modern existence afresh.

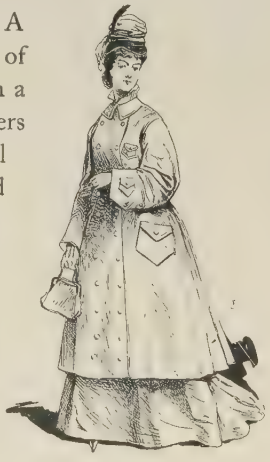
A huge reaction suddenly arose. But this time, instead of the sanguinary form which had disgraced the Commune, it took the most

pacific and mundane course imaginable. The days of blood and terror were succeeded by days of pleasure and of labour, fitly combined. As festivity increased, economic activity increased likewise. The pause of dread and dismay which had marked the year 1870 was followed by an era of splendid civilisation. Like the ancient city of Byzantium, which, after each revolution, and every riot, plunged into a fresh frenzy of triumphant rejoicing, Paris, with a start, woke from her torpor. The Carnival of 1872 was remarkable for gaiety and splendour. The nation refused to let its soul be crushed by misery and despair. Industrial and artistic labour took their onward course.

1871

The six years between 1872 and 1878 sufficed to prepare for the Great Exhibition of the latter date. The immense latent power of the country, its gift of patient toil, were thus affirmed and demonstrated.

The fair sex bore its full share in this national resurrection. Politics aside, the women of France, with their trusting smile and unwavering faith, brought back hope and confidence to the whole nation. And they themselves regained their joyous sovereignty. By degrees, their interest in elegance and personal adornment came back to them. A ribbon, a muff, a sunshade, began to wake a sense of pleasure, and slowly, as some poor soul, just rising from a bed of sickness, tastes life afresh with joy, and wanders slowly down the accustomed walks, under the tender April sun, Frenchwomen learnt again to smile, and love, and deck themselves in bright raiment, and came to understand that pleasure, with its tinkling bells, might drive the memory of past horrors from their heads and hearts.



1873

Never were commerce and industry in better case. But this has been evident, in France, after every political disturbance.

The three republics have each of them been marked by a vigorous recrudescence both of labour and luxury.

Frenchwomen, the tender and long-suffering heroines of the great war, now became the foster-mothers of consolation and of fruitful toil. Every department of art bore witness to their charm and beauty, and

their influence inspired the industrial and artistic revival of the nation. For them costumiers worked, and masons built, and poets sang. Woman, who had cast one brilliant ray of sunshine across the horrible tempest of carnage and defeat, now shone in peaceful glory, under the cool, transparent, hope-inspiring dawn of peace.

1873

Victor Hugo was right again. Women are the one eternal never-failing help. Every Frenchwoman seemed resolved to atone for the sham glories of the Empire.

If, as it has been asserted, one member of the sex had hurried on the war, and called it hers, all her French sisters bowed themselves beneath the awful weight of that responsibility, and women in their thousands sought to atone for her rash word, by cheering Frenchmen forward to their toil, and sharing to the full in every intellectual and pacific undertaking.

George Sand, whose fruitful mind and eager activity never failed her, gave splendid proofs of this feminine gift of many-sided sympathy. Gustave Flaubert, who corresponded with her concerning all things, great and small, foretold the terrible bondage caused by the inevitable necessity of keeping up a huge standing army.

"Everybody will have to be a soldier. Russia has four millions of them now! The whole of Europe will be in uniform. If we do take our revenge, it will be fierce beyond all words. And observe that the idea of taking vengeance on Germany will be the one absorbing thought. No Government will be able to remain in power unless it speculates on this passion. Wholesale slaughter will be the end and aim of all our efforts, the ideal of France!"

Too true, alas! has this prophecy proved!

Society under the new republic grew ultra-patriotic, to the last degree. The word *revanche* was on every woman's lips. The national colours were seen everywhere, beside the mourning still worn for Alsace and Lorraine. The only writers and painters to win popular success were those who touched the chord of patriotism. The gifted Desborde-Valmore, so prematurely snatched away, was almost forgotten. Mme. Ackermann found few admirers. Nothing that did not treat of military matters roused any interest. The general admiration for Henri Regnault's work would not have been half so great, if he had not been killed in battle. Erckmann and Chatrian were hailed transcendent

NEAR AN OMNIBUS STATION

The Palais-Royal (1875).

geniuses. Even Gavarni's *lorettes*, grave and sober-looking, put on a less bold and shameless air. The few remaining famous *cocottes* of the Empire, aged and saddened, retired into silence, and the glory of Cora Pearl was sorely dimmed.

Only genuine talent yet received its meed of praise. Céline Montaland, Augustine and Madeleine Brohan were still applauded to the echo. De Musset's poetry returned to favour. His "Rhin allemand" attracted attention to his other works. He brought Love back to the memories of his readers.

The little god, venturing slowly from his refuge in the silence and dreariness of the ruined palaces, aimed his sharp arrows, as of yore, and shot them, with unerring aim, straight to his victims' breasts. His tender piping sounded sweet to ears long deafened by the strident voice of popular orators. Hearts woke, and passion too. France reigned supreme once more, in matters of costume. A fashion adopted there was meekly accepted by all foreigners, and Paris dictated laws of dress to London, Russia, and America. The fashions of the moment were eminently national, and eminently elegant. There were no more eccentric whimsicalities, borrowed by returning armies, from Italy or from Russia. Dressmakers and milliners followed, for the most part, their own taste and fancy. Some blunders in taste occurred, of course, but there were some exquisite conceptions too. The ladies of the Second Republic had adopted short mantles, sunshades, and broad-brimmed hats. The ladies of the Third Republic accepted the legacy.

1874

By degrees the broad Henry II. collarettes, which had come in during the Romantic period, the caps of Chantilly blonde, imposed on fashion by Queen Amélie, the farthingales and *coiffures à la Fontange* which certain noble ladies still wore at the aristocratic balls, the *catogans* and *coiffures à la Marie Stuart* passed out of sight, and were replaced by a far simpler style of hairdressing, and a more uniform and quieter arrangement of skirts and folds. The incongruities of costume so noticeable in bygone years, in all theatres and outdoor resorts, quite disappeared.

No simpler dress and pose can be imagined than that of the portrait of a young lady with a sunshade, by Edouard Manet.

The redundant crinoline was replaced by an almost Japanese simplicity of line. The gradual influence of Impressionism affected dress

as well as literature and painting. The simple lines, the straight-cut falling skirts, though at first sight they seemed ungraceful, really covered the body in far more natural and simple fashion. Goethe's theory, that "drapery should be the multiplied echo of the body's form," was now held in honour, and Mme. de Girardin's assertion that "the only way to wear a beautiful gown, is to forget it is on one's back," was acknowledged a wise one. The studied carelessness of costume observable in portraits by the great English masters, was generally accepted as the proper aim of fashionable aspiration.

1875

This was quite in harmony with Frenchwomen's new and simpler attitude of mind. De Goncourt writes: "It is a pretty thing to see a Parisian walking in the street, unconscious of the crowd that jostles her, smiling at her own thoughts!" The few words paint a faithful picture. The dress of that date was graceful and becoming, without being too remarkable. The winter gowns of black velvet or satin, the alpacas and mohairs of the summer season, suited their wearers to perfection. The Marie Stuart bonnets, of silk and *crêpe de Chine*, edged with jet beads, and surmounted by a tuft of black feathers, with one drooping loose below them, the *Michael Angelo* hats, with their felt brims, and those dubbed *Léopold Robert*, set off the glossy heads that wore them, admirably. And other innovations, dictated by the fancy of the moment, added a charm of their own to dress. Gloves, to begin with, acquired a huge importance. Never before had this item of costume received such careful attention. It grew into an art, a perfect passion. Many ladies were gloved to the elbow. Almost all these gloves bore numerous buttons; this added to the neatness of the effect produced. Most fashionable women took immense pains about the fit of their gloves, and the fineness of the leather used in making them. There were special glove-shops, which charged special and excessive prices.

1876

Then there was a run on muffs, and finally, on fans. These last began by being of huge unwieldy span, but by degrees, at Fashion's dictate, their dimensions were reduced.

Successful plays gave names to newly invented garments. Immediately after the first performances of "Rabagas," the leading milliners brought out bonnets of that name. Art began to mingle with fashion, and fashion, as always happens, was the gainer, in fancy, originality, and refinement.

Thus, towards 1873, women's dress became more elaborate, and there was a falling away from the austerity of costume which had followed on the war. The first gown struck an eccentric note, and this was soon accentuated by an avalanche of brilliant colours and splendid jewellery.

1877

The burning of the Opera House, on Tuesday, October 28, 1873, gave a momentary check to the increasing expenditure on rich stuffs and precious stones. Once more the scorching breath of the fire-fiend threatened destruction to the vanity and pride of gorgeous robes and dazzling gems. Death, in that terrible form which sometimes snatches its prey in cities or in palaces, still ringing with festive music, did not, indeed, burst on the giddy crowd, as in the ghastly days of the war and of the Commune—but the terror of the conflagration sufficed, for a while, to daunt the merrymakers.

1876

Such events have not been of rare occurrence in the history of Paris. More than once or twice—when the city has teemed with pomp and splendour, and flower-decked arches, and lovely women borne in triumph through the streets, when wild dances have shaken every stage, and songs, thrilling with the exultant joy of life and maddest whirl of passion unrestrained, have rung through every theatre in the town—a carelessly dropped match, some childish wantonness, has done the deed—and the cruel tongues of flame have licked up palaces, and public buildings, fair women, and jewels rich and rare. It is as though some gloomy, merciless angel stood in the shadow, waiting till the city's joys grow too exuberant, and ready, when the delirium of insolence and vanity is at its height, to strike down every actor in the brilliant show, with his avenging hand.

The fire at the Opera, the burning of the Opéra Comique, and the

ghastly scene at the Charity Bazaar of 1897, mark three of these appalling dates of warning and majestic vengeance. What pages have been written, what speeches made, what sermons preached, anent these awful visitations !

1878

But our charming and light-hearted countrywomen have never lent a very attentive ear to the so-called admonitions of divine wrath and punishment.

The mania for expensive dress soon raised its head and spread abroad. At charity bazaars and philanthropic entertainments, Mme. Thiers, Mlle. Dosne, Mme. de MacMahon and the Princesses Troubetskoï and de Beauvau, appeared in rich though sober-tinted dresses. There was an avalanche of lace and blonde and jet and tulle, of diamond tiaras and *rivières* of gems. The old Opera House and the catastrophe that destroyed it were soon forgotten. All the gay ladies thought of was the opening of the new one, which promised to be a worthy temple for the display of their charms.

The first ball given in aid of the Lyons silk-weavers gave a fresh impetus to luxury. Challamel, the St. Simon, in a sense, of this new "aristocracy of diamonds," describes the many changes of fashion during those happy years of national convalescence.

As soon as Garnier's new Opera House was finished, the frivolous swarm of beauties buzzed merrily within its stately walls. Mme. Musart made a sensation in a pale-green gown embroidered with bouquets of roses. And Mme. de Mouchy, Mme. Aymery de la Rochefoucauld, Mme. de Béhaigne, Mme. de Pène, Mme. de Beauport, and Mmes. A. and J. de Rothschild shone in white attire. The last lady especially attracted attention. The front of her gown was a wonderful mass of bead embroidery, resplendent with all the rainbow hues of transparent mother-o'-pearl. Sunshades and fans developed, by degrees, into most essential concomitants of summer costume. The best artists applied their skill and fancy to their adornment, and a world of dainty delicate invention was lavished, in the endeavour to add beauty and elegance to these feminine treasures. The sunshade borrowed something of the cunning workmanship of the Japanese ; the fan rather tended towards the frivolous type of the Regency period. Constantin Guys was there no longer, to depict the fascinating queens of society with his skilful and ever-graceful brush. But De Nittis, Madeleine Lemaire, Toulmouche, Stevens, were all full of talent and keen observation.

The *Vie Parisienne* and *Gazette des Modes* of that period swarm with details concerning the dainty adjuncts of contemporary fashion. The learned Academician Charles Blanc, in his work entitled "Considérations sur le Vêtement des Femmes," had elevated the science of feminine adornment to the rank of a real art. This second Winckelmann acknowledged the preponderating influence of women's love of elegance on all the productions of the loom, the lace pillow, the needle, the artist's brush, and even the dyer's vat. His unerring intuition taught him the value of the love of show and luxury, which brought so much employment and consequent prosperity in its train. What scores of busy fingers found work on those pretty trifles! How many hungry mouths were fed by the wages paid the makers of gay attire for the fair lovers of pleasure and worldly show! How many hands were set to fashion delicate girdles for dainty waists! How many rough toilers faced the furnace heat that melted the component parts of Beauty's mirror! Each masterpiece brought honour to its maker, and money too, earned by the sweat of honest brows, to buy the hungry clamouring children bread.

All the textile arts, and every other connected with feminine adornment, increased in favour and development.

An immense number of hands were employed in the tapestry workers', jewellers', embroiderers', and dyers' trades. The importance of the great industrial centres daily increased.

The demand for Lyons silks, St. Etienne ribbons, muslins from Tarare, and the various materials produced at Roubaix, Rouen and Paris, grew constantly greater. *Lingerie* in all its branches specially occupied the female mind. The somewhat giddy and childish brains of the fair ladies were much absorbed by petticoats and flounces and underclothes of all sorts, foamy with lace, and rich with delicate embroideries.

1878

Much consideration, too, was given to shoes and bonnets.

Towards 1874, the most fashionable footgear was that known as "Charles IX." shoes.

The "pages' caps" for young girls and the *toques Margot* for young married women, came in at about the same time. Ball dresses still had a touch of the Watteau style about them, and the Louis XV. type had not quite gone out. At a ball given by the Paris Tribunal of Commerce to Marshal MacMahon, there was a brilliant and fairylike

display of fanciful dresses. All sorts of new materials made their first candlelight appearance—undyed stuffs, tussore silks, and alpacas and foulards in the natural *écru* tints. Soon after, at the summer outdoor gatherings, new styles of hats and bonnets were brought forward, and until 1880, a constant change in headgear followed. There were hats and bonnets called *Trianon*, *Elisabeth*, *Charlotte Corday*, *Matelot*, *Bergère*, *Bandoulier* and *Fra Diavolo*. When white was the fashionable colour, every one wore a *chapeau Estelle*. There were the *chapeau Flore* and the *chapeau Chevalier* (called *Trianon* when it was made of rice straw), and there were brown straw hats with gorgeous François I^er^ ribbons. Later yet, more literary names prevailed, and hats and bonnets bore such titles as *Ophélie*, *Danicheff*, and *Arménienne*. In the following winter "baby" hoods were seen on children, while their elders adopted a style called *Récamier*. When the Exhibition opened its doors, the variety of names used to describe millinery became yet greater, and the fashionable establishments exposed innumerable shapes for sale, among them the *Amazone*, the *Devonshire*, the *Duchesse d'Angoulême*, the *Olivia*, the *Princess of Wales*, the *Croisette*, and the *Midshipman*.

Dress underwent various modifications, according as it was intended to appear at casinos, at dinner-parties, or balls. Every year brought its own successive changes. Pale blue silk was much worn, and most *décolleté* bodices were square-cut. The changing seasons affected fashions for driving and walking. Violet velvet skirts with a single deep triple-plaited flounce, lined at the head with mauve silk, were frequently worn, and woollen materials, fancy cloths, plastrons, berthes, jackets, gown fronts of Indian cashmere, wrappers for indoor wear, transparent muslins, and dressing-gowns of the finest nainsook were equally favoured.

1878

Narrow-pointed shoes and close-fitting stays were introduced, and so were the cravats known as *La Vallière* and *Malesherbes*. Materials of foreign make were hailed with acclamation. Every woman rejoiced in the flowered cottons, and intensely bright and multi-coloured woollens, sent from distant Oriental climes.

A motley and variegated crowd of foreign and native sightseers filled the gilded colonnades and glittering halls of the Trocadéro and the Champ de Mars. The Exposition Universelle was an extraordinary

ENTRANCE TO THE JARDIN DE PARIS
(*1883*).

display of wealth and splendour. From the farthest corners of the earth the nations sent their best and most valuable products. The fair sex smilingly accepted the homage thus offered to its country and capital. Feminine vanity felt the flattery of the offered tribute—an ocean of gems and precious stuffs, and exquisite fruits, and potent wines, and metals of the richest and the rarest, which rolled its waves to the white feet of France, risen back to glory, and rejoicing in her resurrection.

1878

Meanwhile, the younger women's heads were turned by the influence of the novels and the literature of the day —most of which treated of human passion. Feminine psychology grew more and more complicated. Octave Feuillet's books were eagerly devoured, then came the daring works of Alexandre Dumas, and Gustave Flaubert's and Edmond de Goncourt's earlier books. The lamentably dissolute habits of the later Empire had been suddenly checked by the ruin and misery of the great war. The wild folly of those days was succeeded by a short period of austerity. But the inevitable solemnity of the years of mourning was soon broken by Cupid's merry laughter. Gradually the sly urchin slipped back into human hearts, and his many-hued banner, compact of rain and sunshine, happy tears and lovers' kisses, waved once more over the great city, calling many a recruit to willing service.

Yet the scepticism and indifference of the old days did not regain so obvious a hold upon society. It was as though a touch of past terrors, and of dread of future misery, lay deep in every Frenchwoman's heart. Pleasure was not so hungrily pursued. Women who, in 1878, numbered something between twenty-two and twenty-eight summers, had been between fifteen and twenty-two years old when the war bereft them of their brothers, or their affianced husbands. Many had taken refuge in convents, and hidden their heads under the nun's coif and veil. The unconscious sense of past sorrow still hung over the French aristocracy, and the same shadow clung to the middle classes, which had grown far more severe in their judgment of frivolity.

"Under the Empire," as Dr. Thulié truly puts it, "well-conducted women kept so completely aloof, that people about Court were quite convinced that none were left."

But plenty of good women did still exist. In their retirement they were working, many of them, in the cause of the education of the poor.

Numbers gave much more thought to the future of the rising generation than to the cut of their own gowns. When Balzac created Mme. de Marneff, and Emile Augier published his masterly description of the "Lionnes Pauvres," there was a general cry of protest against what was deemed an impossibility. Yet the moral perturbation so well understood and pictured by both novelists was genuine. Speculation led, among the richer classes, to a condition of venal intrigue and easy virtue. When Henri Becque wrote "Les Corbeaux" he laid his finger on this plague spot.

1879

All honest passion disappeared before love of gain and insincerity. Sterne's affirmation, that serious folk hate Love on the score of its very name, while selfish men loathe it on their own account, and hypocrites from fear of Heaven itself, grew more and more true, and applicable to the state of society. Never were words written in one epoch, more completely in harmony with the conditions of another. Though De Musset may have taught many couples of this period to love, their mutual passion was certainly whetted by their doubts of its duration. Most lovers were given to mental argument. Simple disinterestedness had grown a rarity. Proudhon, and all the positivist philosophers, were widely read.

1879

In spite of patriotic feeling, the German school of thought found far more favour than the English. Schopenhauer's bitter hatreds were eagerly adopted, though his sublime and consoling thoughts were generally overlooked. The admirable writings of John Stuart Mill, and masters of his school, were utterly neglected.

The sceptical mode of thought affected by young men irritated the weaker sex. Within a short space of time the manners, tastes, and habits of Frenchwomen underwent a change. A sort of tacit rebellion filled the female soul. The symptoms took different forms in the various classes of society. Great ladies grew more free in speech and liberal in judgment. Middle-class mothers inculcated theories regarding matrimony which served to protect their daughters from libertine designs. The very courtesans grew censorious and fastidious. It was the beginning of our modern epoch, with all its frivolity, its passion for amusement, and its meanness.

The matrimonial question began to occupy the female mind. The foreign feminine element which was intruding itself into educational establishments, garden-parties, and diplomatic gatherings, filled Frenchwomen with astonishment. The independent manners of Scandinavian and American ladies struck them with surprise.

Fashion began to turn in a fresh direction. Mantles and dresses grew more severe and serious in cut and line. A sort of disagreeable stiffness permeated general drawing-room conversation. A kind of dread seemed to hover over the intercourse between men and women. In one of his most admirable works, "Ce qui ne meurt pas," Barbey d'Aurévilly has given a faithful picture of the misery and suffering inevitably brought upon human beings, by the prevalent social hypocrisy.

1879

Marriage and free love were the chosen subjects of every psychologist. A thousand plans were suggested for the improvement of the absurd laws in vogue. Every author dilated on the absorbing questions affecting women, children, and the intercourse between the sexes, which had preoccupied the great writer Michelet many years before, without, however, leading him to any solution of problems which time and men have still further complicated.

Fourrier and Proudhon filled volume upon volume. Malthus propounded his famous theory. Some writers dilated on the responsibilities of human reproduction with more eagerness than delicacy. Others, of a higher intelligence, showed greater generosity and wit. Amongst these was Professor Richer, whose studies on the subject won universal admiration. The younger Dumas said his say, and said it brilliantly. The Code Napoléon, which allows women less liberty than is bestowed on them in other countries, was thoroughly discussed, and societies for the protection of the weaker sex were formed.

A breath of liberalism passed over the land. Virtue came to be considered—as the great playwright mercilessly put it—a woman's capital. Thence arose the practice known in Paris as *flirtage*, and, in due time, the *demi-vierge* appeared, in society, in literature, and on the theatre-boards.

Apparent freedom began to hide perverted instincts. Modern love, so women declared, had changed its direction. A certain number of

the fair sex grew too promiscuously kind. The great majority lost something of their bloom of modesty and delicacy. Young girls fell into the habit of dealing with young men on the basis of comradeship and good-fellowship, without a thought of natural selection and attraction.

This tendency was strengthened by the habit of sharing the same sports and games. The young folk played tennis, fenced, boated and rode together.

Then came the bicycle, and, mounted on that iron steed, the last remnant of girlish shyness departed.

And here again the god Cupid was fain to interfere.

His dainty wings could not keep pace with the rapid motion of the swift-flying wheels. His wandering lovers left him miles behind, and often he was forced to envy Mercury his winged sandals. Cupid grew cunning. His language was promptly fashioned on that of the trainer and the jockey—for most men were just as much interested in their racing-stables as in their mistresses—and, by degrees, all respect died out of what was once called love.

Ten short years had sufficed to restore Frenchwomen to all their former idleness and carelessness. Luxury and display were not, perhaps, so extreme as in the Emperor's days, but there was a touch of insolence about them, even yet.

1880

In private and personal matters the extravagance was tremendous. Smart women of both worlds spent enormous sums on delicate and filmy underclothing—on laces and furbelows of every kind. Their carved chests were piled with *Mireilles*—high chemisettes of muslin and valenciennes, and *Yvonnes* of crimped Breton lace, and *Médicis*, and *Lamballes*, and surah *fichus*, and *Marie Thérèse* laces. Tulles, and nets, and undyed materials, and satiny stuffs abounded—and there were bows of every kind, *Colbert*, *Figaro*, *Papillon*, *Marion*—with a lace frill attached, *Yolande*, and others yet, in the tissue known as *satin merveilleux*.

Dark colours were preferred at first. Lotus blue, Van Dyck red, and the shades called *loutre* and *mandragore*. But in summer, surah and foulard gowns were the general rule, and every woman was led on, by degrees, to the bright-patterned cottons and light transparent veilings, and all the range of gay or delicate colours that hung the walls, and piled the counters, of the great drapery establishments.

The last remains of feminine modesty sank out of sight, drowned by the prevalent mania for elaborate underclothing. The promiscuity of mineral baths and watering-places, the increasing freedom of conversation, habits, and attitudes, hastened the general decay of manners.

1880

The chief streets of Paris were filled with bicycle-shops. Every town wall in France was plastered with advertisements of Whitworths, Gladiators, Humbers, Sterley Brothers, and the rest. The feverish pulse that once had throbbed in heads and hearts, descended to the legs of wheelmen and wheelwomen.

The Race of Love was run, the pedalling match had taken its place.

The bicycling mania worked an extraordinary change in current fashions.

The Frenchwoman of 1880, unlike her predecessor in 1870, put on a boyishness of demeanour, the independence and freedom of which fairly startled all observers. Love-making in general entered on a new phase. The question of serious happiness faded out of sight, the more commonplace idea of personal enjoyment ruled supreme. Mere sensual gratification of every kind was the sole object of society, and led it on to further years of moral decadence and perpetual toil, of hidden sacrifice and outward show.

The strange medley of degradation and sublimity which is so marked a characteristic of the wayward nature of the French people, was soon to find still more striking exemplification in the national habits, and the relations between the sexes.

CHAPTER X

THE PARISIAN, AS SHE IS

HER PSYCHOLOGY. HER TASTES. HER DRESS

LIGHT, novel and searching, was cast on the feminine questions of the day, when that great psychologist, Alexandre Dumas the younger, first spoke to his public of the "Route de Thèbes." Modern woman is, indeed, a mysterious and alluring sphinx, that waits the traveller's advent; and every man who essays to win her must, in the event of his failure to read her riddle, risk the danger of perishing in bitterness and pain, or, at the very least, of going on his onward way with an empty heart, a void that aches with disillusion, and the irony of fate. An adorable and fascinating sphinx she is! No man regrets the weariness and wonder she has caused him. Her country is a country of marvels, and of fairy enchantment. Even the bravest, and the most inured to war, take thought before they venture within its confines. Don Juan is the only man its dangers never disconcert. Garbed in apparel of the newest cut, a rosebud in his buttonhole, he faces and attacks the dangerous though charming creature, solves all the riddles she invariably sets him, and returns triumphant to his

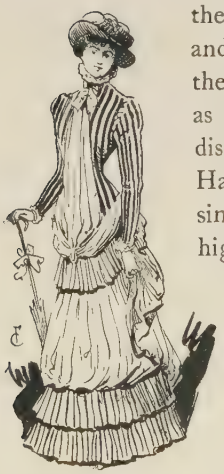
rooms or club, in all the glory of having learnt her frivolous but enchanting secret.

Latter-day lovers lack, it must be said, the melancholy enthusiasm of Werther and Julien Sorel. They are not as treacherous as Lovelace —there is less mournful passion. Education has altered feeling, and scepticism has crept in unawares. Woman has been reduced to playing a doll's part in the contemporary puppet-show.

"Les petites marionnettes font, font, font,
Trois petits tours et puis s'en vont."

The doll is a lovely doll, no doubt. Her beauty is disturbing, but she is dangerous too.

The irony of her paltry destiny came home to the Frenchwoman's soul—and, with all her native cunning and courage, she set herself to claim, aloud, her just prerogative as a reasoning and thinking being. The introduction of foreign doctrines into France, by those who travelled beyond their country's borders, stirred dreams of emancipation in the female breast. Women began to blush for the inferior part they had been forced to play for centuries past, and Mme. de Maupin's scornful words about her would-be suitors hovered on their lips. Their constant intercourse with the gentlemen of the period soon convinced them how utterly the noble races, represented by the sickly and undersized young sportsmen and clubmen who surrounded them, must have degenerated. Their husbands' morals, stained as a rule by jobbery, financial and political, and dissipation, disgusted them as much, probably, as the dreary depression and Hamlet-like despair of lovers and admirers who had long since parted with every illusion. Just at the time when certain highborn dowagers, headed by the Duchesse d'Uzès, were devoting the last days of their glory to supporting Boulanger, and the revision of the constitution, a small group of Frenchwomen were working, in the shadow, on the organisation of a woman's party in France.



1881

Proudhon's and Schopenhauer's theories of the intellectual inferiority of the weaker sex seemed likely to return to favour, amongst a certain section of philosophical reformers.

Yet modern biologists took small interest, as a rule, in the emancipation of women, and the attacks made on the movement by the dramatist Strindberg attracted very little attention in the country.

There is an ancient Egyptian legend which tells us that, at a certain moment in ancient and fabled times, the worship of Isis was supplanted, in the Nile temples, by that of Hatôr, the goddess of Pleasure and of Dress. What happened centuries back in Thebes and Memphis, was reproduced in Paris and the other towns of France. The goddess Hatôr soon reigned supreme. Baronne Staffe's "Cabinet de Toilette" was more studied than "L'Éducation des Filles." The general habit of flirtation soon checked all the attempts of the party of Feminine Independence.

1881

The home of a Parisian lady is a delicious nest, arranged with consummate skill and taste, a worthy setting for the pleasure-loving hostess who adorns it. All the decorative arts and textile manufactures seem to make feminine elegance and daintiness their principal care—painters, architects, upholsterers, all work in the pretty, delicate, somewhat fragile style, that best suits woman's beauty.

The massive and simple forms of the furniture of the last epoch have completely disappeared. The revival of the taste of the First Empire, which took place some time ago, was more especially confined to diplomatic, academic, political, and serious literary circles. The steadygoing members of the Institute and the Senate were the principal admirers of those armchairs *à la Grecque*, and Récamier stools, and grooved furniture of every kind.

The scenes of M. Frédéric Masson's works, of M. d'Esparbè's books, of all the sketches and all the poetry dedicated to the memory of the Imperial epoch, must have lived again in some of these drawing-rooms. It was in some such severe and simple setting, doubtless, that M. Abel Hermant was enabled to cull the tender, touching memories of his "Aïeule."

But the majority of the Frenchwomen of the present day care little for history, even so unremote. Their fancy is far too apt to wander. The idea of looking like Corinne, or Pauline Borghese, has scant charms for them.

The general tendency of women, in France, may be described as a strange and somewhat confused medley—an inclination to go back to

the social habits of the old French society, a whimsical love of Japanese taste, and a marked preference for those pale colours noticeable in the work of contemporary pastellists and water-colour artists. Their artistic instinct shrinks with horror from the commonplace in dress, furniture, and decoration. They are always seeking for originality, even in the arrangement of a bedroom, the decoration of a dressing-room, the hangings to adorn the walls of a drawing-room.

1882

The Parisian of the present day endeavours, as a rule, to have her dress and furniture all in keeping. Her hangings and her gowns must harmonise, as much as may be. Her feeling for colour, and for the innumerable shades of general effect, is delicate and unerring. Nothing about her person is allowed to clash with the carefully arranged symmetry, or enchanting disorder, of her apartments. Simplicity is the strongest quality of her taste. She has learnt to prefer a sober effect, and unpretentious adjuncts, materials that are not showy, and dress that is not gaudy. A sort of modesty, in some cases, of vulgarity, in others, has served to introduce that light and transparent style of costume which some admire for the sake of its reposeful softness, and others because their love of fresco paintings has taught them the beauty of light and attitude peculiar to that department of art. Tables, chairs, couches, cupboards, have acquired the slim and elegant beauty of the exotic trees so frequently used in their construction. Panels and frames are generally very light, and lacquered, or, oftener still, painted in undulating waves of delicate colour. Though the stuffs and materials used in France are, for the most part, produced on the national looms, furniture in general has felt British and other foreign influence. Our bamboo flower-stands and what-nots, as fragile as the reeds they are stained to imitate, our white and varnished picture frames, the garden chairs which invade our winter sitting-rooms, our rocking chairs, and pottery and china, all bear witness to this fact. Most of our fashionable ladies are ruled by this whimsical taste, which links them on the one hand with Miss Helyett, and with Mme. Chrysanthème on the other. A strongly marked liking for pier-glasses, frieze panels, pastels, and faded tapestries, indicated, at one moment, a return to the delicate, somewhat irregular, but ever attractive decoration of the eighteenth century, and every newly arranged house breathed that

complex and alluring charm—a medley of the Trianon, the rustic cottage, and the Maison Verte. The De Goncourt brothers, who were full of an almost unconscious sense of psychology and art, had instinctively recognised this confused mingling of styles, when they published studies of fashions at Yokohama, Versailles, and the "Cour du Roy," side by side with others of René Mauperin's more recent attire. Dressing-room walls were plastered with mosaics, in shades of jade and aquamarine. *Les Fêtes galantes* were the delight of drawing-room actors. Ladies' heads were dressed with all the elaborate fancifulness so dear to the little *mousmés* of Japan ; and, finally, the short jackets and full knickerbockers of the female cyclist were seen at every corner. There was an almost total disappearance, at certain hours, of the lithe and graceful charms of womanhood, and a sort of easy-going good-fellowship, and boyish freedom of speech, replaced them. Many a fascinating hostess, who had been the admired of all admirers, in her pale and creamy-tinted evening dress, appeared, next morning, flying through the Bois, in her tight-fitting English-cut bicycling jacket and her baggy nether garments—the indispensable badge, heretofore, of the mountaineering tourist.

1883

1884

The Liberty stuffs and filmy Indian tissues, the eager fondness displayed for certain flowers (such as orchids and chrysanthemums), the taste for coloured prints after Lawrence, Fragonard, and Boucher, the white and pale green mouldings in which the younger painters frame their work, the delicately coloured bindings chosen for books, and even the covers of the current reviews and magazines, all heighten the exquisite, if somewhat confused, harmony, of surroundings which are so flattering, a testimony to the fair Parisian's intelligence, and so restful and delightful a background to her dainty and delicate charms.

She may be said to have carried the varying taste which dictated her attire, into everything else about her. But she proves her cleverness and refinement in her manner of arranging all these objects. Her constantly increasing intercourse with artistic circles of every kind, develops her wise and chastened taste for elegance and refinement. And the

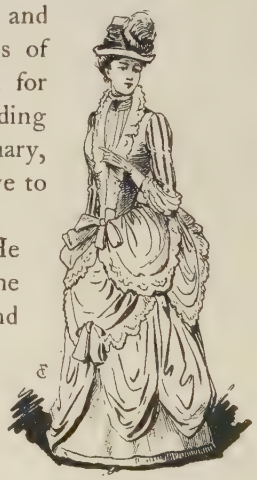
supreme *chic* (there is no other word), which is her special birthright —handed down to her, in spite of Fashion's changes and occasional ugliness, by generations of ancestresses—endues all the decoration, the furniture, the dress and finery, on which she lays her magic wand, with a delightful harmony and overmastering charm, which must enchant and engross all who are permitted to come within their influence.

1885

Winter is the season, above all others, when the fair sex of the present day moves most triumphant. It is the moment of balls, and tea-parties, and first nights at the theatres, the time when all the great anniversaries and festivals come round.

Then, indeed, woman reigns supreme, and displays all the most varied and splendid phases of her elegance.

For a space she becomes Woman again, in very deed—Woman, the enchantress and the siren. Casting aside her mannish garments, she is once more the gracious hostess, light-hearted and friendly, the worthy exponent of the ancient traditions of national politeness. Sport is quite neglected. Except for the pleasant morning canter up the Bois, in a neat riding habit, or some skating-party on the lakes, early in February, our fashionable lady spends all the time she does not give to her social duties, within her own four walls.

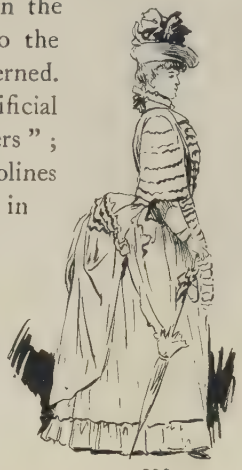


1885

The reign of the great Man Milliner has begun. He is the councillor, the chief stage manager, almost the confidant, of his fair clients. His manner is flattering and obsequious, he is full of affectations and mannerisms. His sovereign will is law. No other man knows so many personal secrets, and so much domestic tittle-tattle. Men tolerate him, as certain Oriental attendants were tolerated by the Turks, because they feel he adds beauty to the objects of their adoration, and that his arts heighten the seductive charm of those they worship.

The fair sex obey his behests without a thought of hesitation, because they know that, whatever disguise he commands them to

assume, they are sure to triumph. A woman's innate independence makes her mistress, in a sense, of even the most absurd and despotic forms of fashion, and she will always contrive to turn the complicated furbelows occasionally forced upon her, to the best account, as far as her own appearance is concerned. Which of us, for instance, does not recollect those artificial additions to the human form known as "dress improvers"; or, to recall a yet more vulgar development, the crinolines in vogue in 1865, and, in a more modified form, in 1885? More recently, again, sleeves swelled about the region of the shoulder, in most extraordinary fashion. Soon after, the reign of the outdoor cape commenced. The destruction of the line of the back was followed by the complete concealment of the fall of the shoulders, and all the lovely proportions of the neck and bust. Gowns grew so intolerably broad that it was almost impossible, at one moment, to get in and out of public conveyances, ticket offices, and theatre stalls. The female form divine was altered to the semblance of a huge dragon-fly, most troublesome, and always in the way. The light-footed sylphs of the Directory, and the somewhat absurd and heavy butterflies of the Empire, had both passed out of sight. Dress was verging on deformity. But this fashion, happily for us, has disappeared.



1888

1889

The more recent forms of dress have been distinguished by greater harmony and delicacy of colouring, a finer sense of form, and fitter selection of the covering destined to veil, without entirely concealing it. The influence of old engravings, and of the various fashions of bygone centuries, heightens the native charm with which most Frenchwomen are endowed. The cloaks, mantles, dresses, and so forth, sent out by the great dressmakers of both sexes—Worth, Laferrière, Paquin, Félix, Rouff, Mme. Callot, Creed, Fred, Vincent, and many another master or mistress of their art—are reproductions of the whole history of costume in France.

Can Fashion still rule where invention is so whimsical? It might well seem impossible. Fashion in fashions is growing more and more apparent. This will end in a uniform style of dress for that hurried

section of society which has no time to cultivate or gratify individual taste, and for those persons who buy clothes made by the gross, just as others take their meals at the Bouillons Duval. But it will also call into existence an immense variety and singularity of costume, ruled by no definite expression or law, but full of individuality ; and the really elegant women—those who cling to this particular quality—will always prefer this distinctive and personal style of dress.

1889

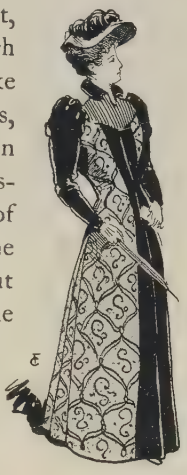
The most special characteristic of contemporary female dress, is the elaboration of undergarments, which, during the last fifteen years, has reached a pitch commensurate, by contrast, with the simplicity and sobriety of all gowns and outer habiliments. This has been the inevitable and legitimate result of the adoption of the English habit of wearing tailor-made clothes out of doors.

All the dainty splendours and pretty trumperies which must necessarily enwrap the female form divine, have been driven inward. *Lingeries* and staymakers cannot make their handiwork too exquisitely sumptuous for their fair customers. No lawn can be too fine, no embroidery too cobweb-like, no silk too transparent, no skilfully treated tissue too light, too fleecily soft, too daintily coloured, and perishably delicate in texture.

Valenciennes, Irish guipure, Mechlin, Chantilly, Venetian point, Alençon, and a profusion of other laces are used, in masses as complicated as the whorls of denticulated petals which form the heart of certain rare exotic blossoms. So prodigious has this branch of feminine fashion grown, that a whole volume might easily be devoted to the subject.

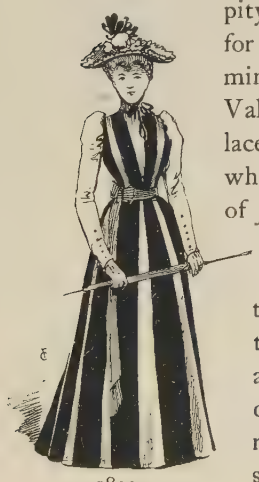
Many of the modes of 1830 have returned to us. The famous leg-of-mutton sleeves, which we never expected to see again, have even enlarged their borders. They swelled to absurdity and caricature ; then, by degrees, they subsided to the dimensions of full epaulettes, and before long the flat sleeve will be with us again. Dressmakers have rung the changes on every form of the legendary capes of the Restoration and July Monarchy—coachmen's capes, and fur capes, and lace capes, some double, some triple, and even sextuple. At the present moment, there seems to be a leaning to full cloaks, with immense collars framing the head, like those in pictures of the Valois period. Skirts have been worn long, and now are shorter, cut in a huge bell-shape, to fall in

folds. They are beginning to assume more reasonable dimensions, and are braided and trimmed all round, with embroideries and flat gimps, much after the style of the year 1825. The *bolero* jacket, fitting close over the loose blouse, which is still in high favour, is braided and trimmed in horizontal lines, just like the skirts. Hats, after having attained giant proportions, both in height and in width of brim, and having been laden with armsful of flowers, are growing narrower, less aggressive, and more graceful in shape. We are even warned of the speedy appearance of a bonnet closely resembling the handkerchief which Bordeaux *grisettes* wear bound about their heads. Concerning which report we may quote the old French proverb, "*C'est fou, donc c'est femme.*"



1890

Appliqué trimmings on gowns are seen in white, black, écru, or cream-coloured lace, and these are mixed with various materials—ribbons, silk, velvet, and jet. Grey and fawn are the favourite shades for mantles and jackets. Under-petticoats and garments of every kind are also made in very delicate colours, pale silks and satinets. Lace, which had dropped out of fashion for a moment (more was the pity), is coming in again. This return is accounted for by the quantities of flounces and liberality of trimming in vogue, which necessitate the use of all the Valenciennes, and Mechlin, and English and Chantilly laces, and blonde, and all the downy and delicate fabrics which milliners have dubbed with the descriptive title of *froufroutage*. All these came back into favour simultaneously with the introduction of cheviot materials and coloured wall-papers for house decoration. All the delicate shades of colour, varying as the tide, tremulous and well-nigh musical, as the tints of sky and sea, those tints as light and brilliant as the petals of flowers, and foliage greens of every hue, are endlessly reproduced in textile fabrics, from muslin and tulle to silk and foulard, from poplins and damasks to lastings, from serge to moiré silks and figured satins. The pretty Auvergne guipures, the Belgian *point de gaze*, and Argentan and Alençon laces, adorn the boudoirs, as well as the gowns, of our fashionable ladies.



1890

Any afternoons not spent at home, or with her friends, are passed

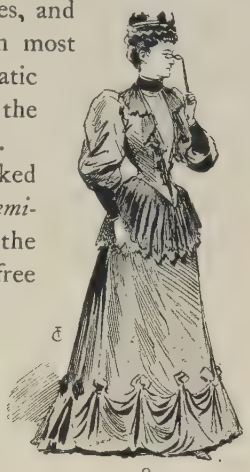
by the fair Parisian in visits to the great shops, or to any other spot where she may hope to find new treasures. Sometimes she looks in on Laferrière, or Rouff, or Fred, or Mme. Callot, and exercises her taste in the selection of new garments, discreet in tone, harmonious in line. Sometimes, at Guerlain's, Houbigant's, or Lubin's, she reviews and sniffs the latest efforts of the perfumer's art. Special sales of silks, and *expositions de blanc*, are sure to attract her. Such occasions give her an opportunity of laying in a whole stock of those surah chemisettes and petticoats, and jerseys, and openworked stockings, and varied and complicated garments, which do so much to heighten her wayward charms. And she will not fail to pay her respects to Worth, and Doucet, and Morin-Blossier, not to mention all the great milliners who congregate in and around the Rue de la Paix.

Her ever hungry vanity finds endless food, during the perpetual merrymakings of the winter season. When tea time approaches—the hour when social talk is at its gayest and pleasantest—she holds her court in her elegant drawing-room, where the most exquisite vases are laden with the loveliest flowers from southern climes. The new year's gifts to be chosen, the various formal visits to be paid, are all discussed. Some ladies, given to water-colour painting, talk about fans and miniatures; others expatiate on all the various gowns they intend to wear at races, theatres, concerts, and evening parties. Sometimes, when artists are present, the talk grows yet more interesting. Hints are given, and received, as to the best mode of posing for one's picture, and how to look one's fairest at charity bazaars, or elsewhere. At Christmas time come evening gatherings, ringing with the laughter and delight of children, and late dinners in fashionable taverns and restaurants, whither men come with their mistresses, and women with their lovers, and solitary ladies of the town sit waiting for the opportunity chance generally brings them.

1891

For in winter, women of every kind elbow one another, whether they will or not. The distances kept by polite society all fade away, when every class is crowded together in places of public resort. The

society columns of the *Journal* and the *Figaro*, and many kindred publications, huddle together the most illustrious princesses, and the best known courtesans, the most fashionable actresses, and the most retiring ladies of the wealthy *bourgeoisie*, in most confused and easy-going fashion. This is symptomatic of our times. Republican society has suppressed the boundaries which formerly existed between every class.



1891

The modern woman, whatever be her caste, is pricked by jealousy of her neighbour, whether aristocrat or *demi-mondaine*. The courtesan envies the married woman the status conferred by her condition, which gives her free entrance to every circle and every place, however puritan and correct. The fashionable lady mourns her inability to attain a state of independence, and a reputation which would leave her free to commit the wildest freaks. These longings and these spites cannot fail to draw the various classes nearer to each other, in certain places, and on certain occasions, and signs of this tendency are more apparent, seemingly, in winter, when city festivities are in full swing, than at summer haunts, sea-bathing resorts, and watering-places.

This fusion is being daily accelerated by the general tendency of literature, art, and the stage.

The balls at the Opera, during Carnival time, the sermons at St. Roch or Notre-Dame, to which every smart lady must listen, the Colonne and Lamoureux concerts, and the *cafés-chantants*, all bear witness to the increasing closeness of connection between the various classes. Religious feeling and æsthetic taste frequently appeal to the same auditors. Père Didon's mild and anodyne oratory charms the fair sex in its graver moments. Yvette Guilbert's gift of suggestive song, and Mlle. de Mérode's graceful steps, give a pleasure which any woman may enjoy between a smart wedding at the Madeleine, or at St. Philippe du Roule, and a first night at the Comédie Française or the Opéra Comique. The confessional, the circus promenade, the theatre stall, are equally accessible to all.

That similarity of tendency, of taste, and of commercial instinct, which has bound the political, the military, the financial, and the artistic world so closely together, has done its share towards the development of a community in pleasure as well as in duty. The doors of a select and royalist *salon* in the Rue de Grenelle, or the Boulevard

Saint-Germain are opened to admit the wife of some great public official. Another, much frequented by the best Jewish society, welcomes the widows and daughters of rich Catholic manufacturers, whose fortunes and dowries may, with skilful management, increase the riches of their entertainers. General Booth's barracks, and his cosmopolitan and occasionally well-favoured troops, may find themselves next door to the mysterious chamber wherein a circle of neurotic women seek to evoke hidden spirits, and practise all the loathsome mummeries of the *Messe Noir*.

1892

The corridors of the Folies-Bergères, Olympia, the Pôle Nord, and the Scala, are full of fashionable women, attracted thither by the reports of Mlle. d'Alençon's love adventures, the barely decent attire of Rose de Mai, and the *déshabillés* of Mlle. Anna Held. Ladies of the gay class never fail to fix their residence, whenever possible, in the best quarters of the town, and the Champs Elysées, the Rue de Rome, the aristocratic Faubourgs, and the Boulevards d'Auteuil, have become the home of many a successful *horizontale*.

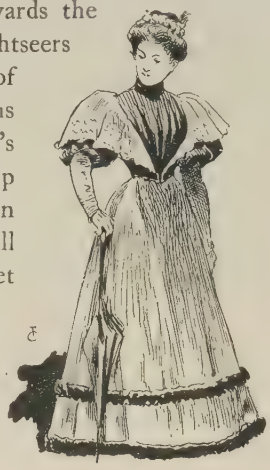
In a great town like Paris, the strictest habits and the easiest virtue often rub shoulders. It is a great hive filled with a various swarm; duchesses and theatrical ladies, *grisettes* and errand-girls, dowagers and *demi-vierges*, all buzz in the intoxicating atmosphere of wild enjoyment, which so excites the vital powers that the footfall of Death is scarcely heard, and nothing but a national mourning, or something very near it, will give the merrymakers pause. The little bees can give no thought to anything but their honeyed food. Serious thought and reflection have no charms for such fragile beings. Colour and form, clatter and light, are the sole objects of their joy and delight, and with these alone their life is filled, till spring comes round again.

1892

With the spring sunshine comes the call to still more elegant gatherings—the Fête des Fleurs, the Grand Prix and the two Salons. Clubmen, sportsmen, and eccentric painters are favoured and caressed, and many a secret intrigue is carried on, to obtain a medal of honour, or

ensure the success of certain racing colours. When the elections to the Institute take place, duchesses will compromise themselves, and famous blue-stockings lay themselves at the feet of ancient members of the Academy.

Then the green plain of Longchamp blossoms with fair women in dainty headgear, the Grand Prix and the Fête des Fleurs take place, and the long files of carriages wend their way towards the Place de la Concorde, between the crowds of sightseers gathered in the Champs Elysées. The season of triumph rolls slowly by. Some happy fair attains passing celebrity as the subject of a successful artist's brush or chisel. Her effigy, exhibited at the Champ de Mars, is signed by Boldini or La Gandara. Soon the Horloge, the El Dorado, and Jardin de Paris will open their gates. Garden parties, tennis and croquet parties, and private theatricals are about to begin. Wagner, Berlioz, and César Franck are forsaken for Polin or Fugère, and the delights of listening to Gustave Charpentier and Vincent d'Indy are exchanged for those of the less refined and somewhat profane music to be heard in outdoor restaurants.



1893

At last the echo of political events hastens departure. Reports of anarchist plots, conflagrations, possibilities of war or disturbance, and Bourse rumours, drive the gay world to seek country houses, parks, and sporting estates. Railway seats and sleeping-cars are ordered by telephone, and thousands of dainty travellers take their way towards the freedom and stillness of forest and of field.

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The fair being, formed by Heaven for man's adoration, is a creature of intelligence, as well as of mere beauty. So many psychologists have made her their chief study, that she herself has come to believe in her own dominating importance. From the field of passion she has passed to that of intellect, and she is equally at home in either. Thousands of writers and of artists have devoted the greater part of their work to glorifying, or to explaining, her. Some authors have dilated on female passion in a manner so complicated, and so subtle, as almost to drive us to accept the oldest of all instincts for a new-found science.

M

Although, at every period, love has been the principal theme of authors and playwrights, it has never so completely absorbed them as at this moment.

The women of the present day have had their psychologists (Beyle, Bourget, Barrès); their flatterers (Maizeroy, Mendès); their poets (Baudelaire, Verlaine, Silvestre); their judges (Dumas, Flaubert, Becque); their historians (Hermant, Zola, Prévost); their philosophers (France, Renan); their humorists (Willy, Allais, Chapus, Guillaume); their inquisitors (D'Aurevilly, Peladan).

1895

All these men have taught her different facts about herself. Yet in every case, the work has been done with deference, treating the subject as an undisputed sovereign.

Painters have been less merciful. The half-truths of the "Lettres des Femmes" and of "Mensonges," the romantic biographies of which "Mme. Bovary" was the forerunner, the artistic pages of "Chérie" and "La Faustin" never reached the philosophic severity of Degas' pastels and Forain's sketches.

All women, in their eyes, are courtesans, without a touch of modesty.

Degas' chalk gives us the delicate skin of the modern woman, Forain's charcoal indicates every line of her thin, eager-looking body; but even this is surpassed by the graver's tool as wielded by Félicien Rops. His art is downright surgery and dissection. All the lust, and perversity, and wickedness of human passion have been perpetuated by the great engraver, in plates whose lifelike presentation of vice startles and terrifies. Other artists, too—Louis Legrand, Jules Cléret, Helleu de Feure, Knopp, and Rassenfosse have done brilliant work in the same direction.

But most women have rebelled against a form of art which, faithful as it is, presents them in so unbecoming a light. A reaction in individual taste has followed, and it is only fair to say that to the fair sex, principally, is due the honour of having brought back the early masters, Leonardo da Vinci, and even the British pre-Raphaelite school, to their proper position in public estimation. Most ladies have imitated the falling braids of hair painted by Botticelli, the embroidered bodices worn by the wives of Italian dignitaries, limned by Benozzo Gozzoli, and the attitudes of the angelic creatures represented by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Edward Burne-Jones. This return to the taste of the

BICYCLING

The Ladies of the wheel (1896).

IN THE CABINET DES ESTAMPES (Bibliothèque Nationale).

The search for bygone fashions (*1897*).

Italian decadence has had some regrettable results, and the passion for bicycling may be said to have accentuated a departure from the ordinary rules governing the intercourse of women with each other, and with the stronger sex, which, if report be true, has given rise to no little scandal, and may seriously affect the fortunes of those nations affected by it.

1896

It is no easy task to pass judgment on one's own period, to appreciate its manners and customs, and give them their just meed of praise or blame. There is always a risk of over-optimism, or too great pessimism. We lack the distance which ensures a good general view, and we are fain to satisfy ourselves with describing things as they are, without any attempt at moralising on their general significance. Certainly no man who is still young, a devoted admirer of the fair sex, and a sincere lover of elegance, harmony, and pleasing colour, can fail to feel a special tenderness for his own contemporaries, which leads him to set them far above the women of any other period. He has this excuse, at all events—that he sees the women of his day, in all their life and beauty, that he can take note of all their gestures, of their walk and sunny smiles, that he can mark all their exquisite charms, and listen to the rustle of their dainty garments, while the beauties of bygone days—those whom we have met on our journey down the stages of the past century—only appear to him in stiff engravings yellowed by time, which, though picturing the garb they wore, lack all the mobile grace of living attitude, and the unreproducible expression of face and form.

1898

To sum her up, the woman of the present period, a being full of intellect and refinement, and quick to seize the most delicate shades in everything, is unconsciously borne forward on the electric wave which drives contemporary humanity into ceaseless action. Her misfortune is, that, apart from her family duties, and the charitable work in which she so frequently engages, life offers her but vague and uncertain objects for the occupation of her eager faculties. She would fain spend herself in acts of devotion, and struggle in glorious combat. Already her

intelligence has led her in the direction of art and science. We have lady doctors, and lady lawyers, and sculptors and painters of the fair sex are exceedingly numerous. The movement is yet in its infancy; great cities like Paris are intellectual poles, which drive the universe into action. Frenchwomen have not escaped this influence, and what they find hard to bear, is the passive part assigned them in a society that thrills with action.

Who can say whether the Parisian of the present day represents the end of a race, the last expression of a state of being shortly to disappear? or whether she should be accepted as an evident type of evolution, an embryonic form of the woman of the future, called to play her part in the birth of a new society?

The riddle is a deep and puzzling one, which no man, we believe, will dare to answer.

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